



PHD

Europeanization as a cause of Euroscepticism – comparing the outlooks of parties in Eastern and Western Europe: Bulgaria (Ataka), Romania (PRM), the Netherlands (PVV) and Germany (die Republikaner)

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Abstract

This thesis examines party-based Euroscepticism across four different national contexts in the period 2011-3 by bringing into focus right-wing populist parties. Understanding Europeanization as a label for the impact of engagement with the EU and its practical and normative influences on statecraft, policy-making, and the wider society, the thesis looks into the Europeanization of narratives of national identity, minority rights issues, immigration and citizenship. It discusses the way in which the impact of engagement with the EU is perceived as well as the nature of the arguments made against the EU's involvement in associated policy processes. There has been a recent upsurge in Euroscepticism due to a combination of economic and political factors, on both the popular and party level in EU countries, as well as the increased blurring of the boundaries between mainstream and fringe Eurosceptics. Hence, it is important to analyze the precise reasons behind this phenomenon. The discussion focuses on "soft Euroscepticism" – the thesis is generally not interested in pondering the generic arguments against a country's membership in supranational entities or shedding light on those parties who oppose the underlying values on which the EU project rests. The thesis therefore probes the attitudes of parties that – with the recent and partial exception of the PVV in the Netherlands – tend to emphasize relatively specific issue-areas as sources of concerns.

This work is primarily based on qualitative methods - 32 elite interviews with nationalist-populist politicians including key figures such as party leaders (Rolf Schlierer, Gheorghe Funar), European Parliament representatives (Barry Madlener) and members of the National Parliament as well as of the general party councils (Ventsislav Lakov) in addition to detailed analysis of policy documentation and books authored by party representatives – and highlights and deconstructs these parties' grievances attributable to nationalistically-oriented concerns. It includes a detailed literature review that clarifies the EU's impacts and country-

specific historical and contemporary differences in the four domains affected by “Europeanization” (Chapters 1-3) and then in Chapters 4-6 uses original empirical data to compare the attitudes of the four parties – Ataka, PRM, REP, and PVV – with regard to the issues already introduced.

The thesis utilizes theoretical approaches drawn from several disciplines ranging from political science to sociology, though it mostly confines itself to those pertaining to core group or minority/ethno-regionalist nationalist mobilization, ethnic vs. civic nationalisms in Eastern vs. Western Europe, as well as the different role played by EU conditionality in relation to the political landscape on the two sides of the continent. Extrapolating from this body of research, it develops hypotheses and projections regarding the expected disconnect in viewpoints between Eastern and Western parties.

The study finds that attitudes towards “Europeanized” issues areas diverge greatly and do not necessarily correlate with the extent to which EU membership as a whole is opposed by the party. In line with previous research findings, the EU’s capacity to create a super-order nationalism that could challenge conventional readings of patriotism is generally not conceptualized as a significant threat. However, the interviews did reveal that pre-existing transcendent identities – like Latin identity in the case of Romania or the Slavic one in Bulgaria - – are perceived as threatened or as being tacitly degraded due to assumed cultural biases within the EU. At the same time, the reduced salience of such identities among the members of the Western populist parties does not make them more sympathetic to Pan-Europeanism. EU effects on immigration are predictably rated as manifestly detrimental by the West European parties, because they distrust the professionalism of EU agencies and networks, dislike the Eastern Europeans’ increasing involvement in making higher-level decisions and perceive the EU as more liberally inclined than the national government in this realm (with the latter two points especially applicable to the PVV). However, it was

interesting that the East Europeans also expressed some disquiet due to the EU's supposed culpability in encouraging emigration of their own citizens and the presumed unwillingness of the EU organs to offer them the necessary financial means for combating immigration into Bulgaria across the Turkish border. However, contrary to theoretical expectations, the study suggests that there are no hard and fast rules when it comes to the populist party's proclivity to regard the EU as an ally of "minority lobbies", with the PVV (the most Eurosceptic party) assessing the relevancy of this aspect as minor, while it is gauged to be of fundamental importance by Ataka (less Eurosceptic than the PVV). Among CEE populists, the thesis shows how "privileged minorities" like Hungarians and Turks are viewed with alarm due to supposedly making use of the EU level in order to advance their secessionist ambitions (Hungarians in Romania) or improve their socio-economic prospects at the expense of the majority (Turks in ethnically mixed regions of Bulgaria). In short, the thesis establishes that there is still a strong dividing line between Eastern and Western populist parties in relation to the assessments made with regard to the impact of the EU on European identity, migration issues and majority-minority dynamics.

Keywords: nationalism, Euroscepticism, populism, Europeanization, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, minorities, immigration, Pan-Europeanism, empowerment, transcendent identities

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My apologies if I have missed someone (it was by no means intentional), but he/she will certainly be occupying a prominent spot somewhere in the back of my mind.

Europeanization as a cause of Euroscepticism – comparing the outlooks of parties in Eastern and Western Europe: Bulgaria (Ataka), Romania (PRM), the Netherlands (PVV) and Germany (*die Republikaner*)

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List of Abbreviations

50+ (*Nederland*) - 50PLUS (Netherlands)

A 10 – Eastern European countries that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007

acquis communautaire (acquis) – Community acquis

AfD – *Alternative für Deutschland* (Alternative for Germany)

AKP (JDP) (*Türkiye*) – *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (Justice and Development Party) (Turkey)

AMC (*Република Македонија*) – Albanian Muslim Community (Republic of Macedonia)

AN (*Italia*) – *Alleanza Nazionale* (National Alliance) (Italy)

AS (*Italia*) – *Azione Sociale* (Social Action) (Italy)

ASEAN - Association of Southeast Asian Nations

Ataka (*България*) – *Национално Обединение Атака* (Attack National Union) (Bulgaria)

БКК/ВСС – *Български Конституционен Съд* (Bulgarian Constitutional Court)

ВСМ – *Движение „България на гражданите“* (Bulgaria for Citizens Movement)

BEL - *Българска Евролевица* (Bulgarian Euro-left)

BL - *Българската левица* (The Bulgarian Left)

BNA – *Народно Събрание на Република България* (Bulgarian National Assembly)

BNP – British National Party

BSP – *Българска Социалистическа Партия* (Bulgarian Socialist Party)

BWS – *България без цензура* (Bulgaria Without Censorship)

BZÖ - *Bündnis Zukunft Österreich* (Alliance for the Future of Austria)

CDA (*Nederland*) - *Christen-Democratisch Appèl* (Christian Democratic Appeal)

(Netherlands)

CDU (*Deutschland*) – *Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands* (Christian Democratic Union of Germany)

CEE – Central and Eastern Europe

CEEC (s) – Central and Eastern European country (ies)

Centrum Democraten (Nederland) – Central Democrats (The Netherlands)

COE – Council of Europe

COMECON – Council for Mutual Economic Assistance

comp. - comparative

COREPER – Committee of Permanent Representatives

CoR – Committee of the Regions

CSCE - Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

CSU (*Bayern, Deutschland*) – *Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern* (Christian Social Union of Bavaria)

CSU (*Deutschland*) – *Christlich-Soziale Union* (Christian Social Union) (Germany)

CU (*Nederland*) - *ChristenUnie* (Christian Union) (Netherlands)

D66 (*Nederland*) - *Democraten 66* (Democrats 66) (Netherlands)

DF – *Dansk Folkeparti* (Danish People's Party)

Die Grünen – *Die Grüne Alternative* (The Greens – the Green Alternative)

Die Linke – The German Left

Dr. – Doctor of Philosophy

ДСБ/DSB – *Демократи за силна България* (Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria)

DVU – *Deutsche Volksunion* (German People's Union)

EC – European Commission or European Community

ECN – European Convention on Nationality

ECHR – European Convention on Human Rights

ECJ – European Court of Justice

ECN – European Convention on Nationality

ECPHR – European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights

ed./eds. – editor (s)

EDU – European Democrat Union

EEC – European Economic Community

EFA – European Free Alliance

ELDR – European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party

ELP – European Liberal Party

EMU – European Monetary Union

ENP – European Neighbourhood Policy

ENPP - Europeanization of National Political Parties (project)

EP – European Parliament

EPERN – European Parties Elections and Referendums Network

EPF (s) - European party federation (s)

EPI (s) – European Party International (s)

EPP – European People’s Party

ERDF – European Regional Development Fund

(EU) *acquis* – (European Union) *acquis communautaire*

Europol – European (Union) Police Office

FC (*România*) - *Forȃa Civică* (Civic Force) (Romania)

FDP (*Deutschland*) – *Freie Demokratische Partei* (The Free Democratic Party)

FI – *Forza Italia* (Italian Force)

FKFPP (*Magyarország*) - *Független Kisgazda, Földmunkás és Polgári Párt* (Independent Smallholders, Agrarian Workers and Civic Party) (Hungary)

FN (*France*) – *Front National* (National Front)

FRG/BRD – *Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Federal Republic of Germany or West Germany)

Frontex - *Frontières extérieures* (European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders)

FP – *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* (Freedom Party of Austria)

Garda de fier (*România*) – Iron Guard (Romania)

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

GDR – *Deutsche Demokratische Republik* (German Democratic Republic/East Germany)

GERB/CEDB – *Граждани за Европейско Развитие на България* (Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria)

GL - *GroenLinks* (GreenLeft)

Golden Dawn (*Ελλάδα*) - *Λαϊκός Σύνδεσμος – Χρυσή Αυγή* (The People's Association – Golden Dawn) (Greece)

HCNM - High Commissioner on National Minorities

INTERREG IVC - Innovation & Environment Regions of Europe Sharing Solutions

IREP (University of Bath) – International Relations and Politics Group

IRES (*România*) – Romanian Institute for Assessment and Strategy

ITS (Group) – Identity, Tradition and Sovereignty (Group)

Jobbik - *Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom* (Jobbik, the Movement for a Better Hungary)

Jus sanguinis – right of blood

Jus soli – right of the soil

ЛДПР/LDPR – *Либерально-Демократическая Партия России* (Liberal Democratic Party of Russia)

LN - *Leefbaar Nederland* (Livable Netherlands)

LN (*Italia*) – *Lega Nord* (Italian Northern League Party)

LPF (*Lijst Pim Fortuyn*) (*Nederland*) – Pim Fortuyn List (Netherlands)

(LS)-HZDS – *Ludová strana – Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko* (People's Party – Movement for a Democratic Slovakia)

MEP(s) – Member (s) of the European Parliament

MERCOSUR - *Mercado Común del Sur* (Southern Common Market)

MRF (*България*) – *Движение за Права и Свободи* (Movement for Rights and Freedoms)

ND (*România*) - *Noua Dreaptă* – New Right

NFSB – *Национален фронт за спасение на България* (National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria)

NGO (s) – Non-governmental organization (s)

NMSS (*България*) – *Национално Движение Симеон II* (National Movement Simeon II)

No. (s) – Number (s) or Issue (s) (of a Journal Article, Research Paper Series)

NPD (*Deutschland*) – *Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (National Democratic Party of Germany)

НПСД/NPSD (NPFD) (*България*) - *Народна партия „Свобода и достойнство“* (“National party “Freedom and dignity”) (Bulgaria)

NWE – Northern and Western Europe

ODS (*България*) – *Обединени Демократични Сили* (United Democratic Forces)

OSCE – Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

PC (*România*) - *Partidul Conservator* (Conservative Party of Romania)

PCR (*România*) - *Partidul Comunist Român* (Romanian Communist Party)

PDL (*România*) – *Partidul Democrat-Liberal* (Romanian Democratic Liberal Party)

PDS (*Deutschland*) – *Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus* (The Party of Democratic Socialism)

Perussuomalaiset (*Suomi*) – The Finns Party (formerly known as the True Finns)

PES – Party of the European Socialists

Plaid Cymru – The Party of Wales

PNL (*România*) – *Partidul National Liberal* (National Liberal Party of Romania)

PNT (*România*) – *Partidul National Țărănesc* (National Peasants' Party) (Romania)

PP-DD (*România*) - *Partidul Poporului – Dan Diaconescu* (The People's Party – Dan Diaconescu) (Romania)

PRM – *Partidul Romania Mare* (Greater Romania Party)

PRO (*Deutschland*) – *Partei Rechtsstaatlicher Offensive* (Law and Order Offensive Party or Schill Party)

Prof. - Professor

PSD (*România*) – *Partidul Social Democrat* (Social Democratic Party) (Romania)

PvdA (*Nederland*) - *Partij van de Arbeid* (Labour Party) (Netherlands)

PvdD (*Nederland*) - *Partij voor de Dieren* (Party for Animals) (Netherlands)

PVV (*Nederland*) – *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (Party for Freedom) (Netherlands)

QMV – Qualified majority voting

RB (*България*) – Реформаторски блок (Reformist Bloc) (Bulgaria)

REP (*Deutschland*) – *Die Republikaner Partei* (German Republican Party)

RMDSZ (*România*) - *Romániai Magyar Demokrata Szövetség* (Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania)

ROP – *Ruch Odbudowy Polski* (Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland)

RPR (France) – *Rassemblement pour la République* (Rally for the Republic)

Schill (*Deutschland*) – Law and Order Offensive Party (Germany)

SDP (*Deutschland*) – *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (Social Democratic Party of Germany)

СДС/UDF (*България*) – *Съюз на демократичните сили* (Union of Democratic Forces) (Bulgaria)

SEA – Single European Act

Self-Defense Party (*Polska*) - *Samoobrona Rzeczpospolitej Polskiej* (Self-Defense of the Republic of Poland)

SFP (*Suomi*) - *Svenska folkpartiet i Finland* (Swedish People's Party of Finland)

SGP (*Nederland*) - *Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij* (Reformed Political Party) (Netherlands)

SI – Socialist International

SMK (*Slovensko*) - *Strana maďarskej koalície* (Party of the Hungarian Coalition) (Slovakia)

SP (*Nederland*) - *Socialistische Partij* (Socialist Party) (Netherlands)

SPD (*Deutschland*) - *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (Social Democratic Party of Germany)

SPDU (*Deutschland*) – *Sozialdemokratische Partei der Demokratischen Union* (Social Democratic Party of the Democratic Union)

SPSS – Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

SVP (*Italia*) – *Südtiroler Volkspartei* (People's Party of South Tyrol) (Italy)

TEU – Treaty on European Union

TNPs – Transnational party (parties)

TREVI group – *Terrorisme, radicalisme et violence* (Terrorism, radicalism and violence)

group

UDMR (DUHR) (*România*) - *Uniunea Democrată Maghiară din România/Romániai Magyar*

Demokrata Szövetség (Democratic Union of Hungarians from Romania)

UK – United Kingdom

UKIP – UK Independence Party

US (A) – United States of America

USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

VB (*België/Belgique*) – The *Vlaams Blok* (Flemish Block) (Belgium)

VB (*België/Belgique*) – *Vlaams Belang* (Flemish Interest) (Belgium)

VMRO (*България*) – *Българско Национално Движение* (Bulgarian National Movement)

Vol. - Volume

VVD (*Nederland*) – *Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie* (People's Party for Freedom and Democracy) (Netherlands)

General Introduction

This thesis investigates the determinants behind the Eurosceptic attitudes of nationalist-populist parties, based in countries that are members of the EU.¹ It compares “old” (Western European) and “new” (Central and Eastern European) member states with regard to the degree to which their expressed reservations towards the EU project could be seen as outgrowths of specific manifestations of Europeanization processes. This PhD is not concerned with the directly economic causes of Euroscepticism, but instead analyzes the objections of Eurosceptic parties to political and cultural aspects of the EU project. In particular, it considers their concerns about threats to the identity of “core” (i.e. majority) populations. Such threats could emanate from below or above. The main example of the former phenomenon is the EU empowerment of minorities (both well-established national minorities and immigrant populations). Minority empowerment is often associated with better minority representation in legislature or national cabinets, which in turn encourages ordinary members of such groups to become more involved in the political process.² It may be confined to the “descriptive stage” (remain on the representational level) or cross over into the “substantive stage” (minority representatives are actually able to trigger changes in legislation that are favorable to minorities).³ Alternatively, empowerment could remain discursive in the sense of legitimating certain minority struggles without necessarily resulting

¹ While the European Union formally came into being following the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty on 1 November 1993 and it achieved a “consolidated and unified legal personality” in the aftermath of the going into effect of the Treaty of Lisbon on 1 December 2009, in this thesis I will use the shorthand “EU” to refer to both the European Union and its historical antecedents like the European Communities, unless otherwise indicated. (in Frank Hoffmeister. *Litigating against the European Union and Its Member States – Who Responds under the ILC's Draft Articles on International Responsibility of International Organizations?*, 2010, pp. 723-724 and Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union).

² Banducci, Susan A., Todd Donovan, and Jeffrey E. Karp. *Minority Representation, Empowerment and Participation* (2004), p. 534.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 538.

in any representational dividends.⁴ Thus, the aim is to discover whether minority groups within certain countries have started to be appraised as more or less threatening due to the influences of the EU and whether the opportunities for “nationalist expression” of members of the majority groups are appraised to have been stifled (or amplified) due to direct EU measures or indirect EU influences. The principal example of the former phenomenon is the EU promotion of European identity (“Euronationalism”) which may seem to be at the cost of national identity.

The main objects of analysis are the relevant dimensions of Europeanization and nationalist-populist parties and politicians. The thesis considers the “objective threats” (actual policy of the EU/European institutions in these areas) before moving on to the perceptions of Eurosceptic politicians regarding the mutual influences between the EU and nation-states (Europeanization). The research is based on interviews about such policies and materials presented in the party’s programmes and other relevant works, as well as accounts documenting the evolution of their Eurosceptic sentiments.

A multitude of studies on the origins, effects, and strategies to counter the phenomena tied to Euroscepticism have already been undertaken. This abundance is especially impressive if one takes into account that this subject matter has only really been on the radar of scholars since the early 1990s. In the current age, Euroscepticism does not show any indication that it is receding from the EU political landscape. On the contrary, a substantial number of nationalist-populist parties, which are conventionally primary exponents of Eurosceptic sentiments, have increased their influence in both the “old” and the “new” EU

⁴ Jenne, Erin K. *Ethnic Bargaining: the Paradox of Minority Empowerment* (2007), p. 30.

member states.⁵ At the 2013 legislative elections in Austria, the Freedom Party came in third place, gathering 20.7 % of the votes for its most successful showing since 1999.⁶ Similarly, in the eastern and southern parts of the continent, far right parties like the Hungarian Jobbik and the Greek Golden Dawn have in recent years significantly elevated their electoral profiles. The 2014 European Parliament elections saw Eurosceptic parties achieve unprecedented success,⁷ with the Front National, UKIP and the Danish People's Party (DF) emerging as the number one electoral forces in their respective countries,⁸ sparking discussions regarding the future configuration of alliances in the European Parliament and the continued domestic political stability in these states.⁹ While perceived ethnic threat and distrust of the political system remain the main determinants behind citizens' decision to cast their vote for radical right parties, Euroscepticism in itself remains the third strongest explanatory factor.¹⁰

Among ordinary citizens, there has been an increased reluctance to emotionally invest in European integration¹¹ and the citizens of the four largest economies in the eurozone (Germany, France, Spain, and Italy) have become more distrustful of the EU institutions than even the perennially Eurosceptic British.¹² The political mainstream has also not been insulated from the Eurosceptic turn. In quite a few Western European countries, a relative “normalization of attitudes” towards nationalist-populist EU-opposed factions like the *Front National* and a “mainstreaming of extreme right discourses” has become the rule. A notable example of this paradigm shift was the aftermath of the 2012 French presidential election,

⁵ Report of the Group of Eminent Persons of the Council of Europe. *Living Together – Combining diversity and freedom in 21st-century Europe* (2011), pp. 17-18.

⁶ Tirone, Jonathan and Alexander Weber. *Austrian Ruling Parties Eke Out Win With Record-Low Support*, 29 September 2013.

⁷ *France 24*. A look at the European Parliament's Eurosceptic parties, 27 May 2014.

⁸ Traynor, Ian. *Front National wins European Parliament elections in France*, 25 May 2014.

⁹ *The Globe and Mail*. Eurosceptic election surge threatens governments across EU, 26 May 2014.

¹⁰ Werts, Han, Peer Scheepers and Marcel Lubbers. *Euro-scepticism and radical right-wing voting in Europe, 2002-2008: Social Cleavages, socio-political attitudes and contextual characteristics determining voting for the radical right* (2013), p. 196.

¹¹ Duff, Andrew. *On dealing with Euroscepticism* (2013), p. 141.

when no exasperation was expressed and there was a curious absence of vociferous protests among significant segments of the French population following the electoral gains made by Marine Le Pen and the *Front National*. In Aurélien Mondon's view, "the French no longer found the extreme right particularly disconcerting".¹³ Furthermore, there is some indication that Euroscepticism among a number of "core" members of the European Union like the UK is no longer regarded as merely a rhetorical exercise to curry favour with the electorate, but may reflect a willingness on the part of nation-state elites to go all the way and engage in concrete actions that could fundamentally change the powers invested in the EU and even put its future into question.¹⁴

Accordingly, as Euroscepticism could naturally have adverse effects when it comes to the potential for further deepening of the Union or could exacerbate social tensions, it is important to evaluate to what extent the EU itself is indirectly responsible for this phenomenon. Paul Taggart has characterized "increased Euroscepticism as a corollary of increased [European] integration and its accompanying effects on the state".¹⁵ Thus, it is of the essence to identify the determinants behind some of the expressed grievances by nationalist-populist parties in relation to Europeanization (likely to be magnified in comparison to those of liberal and conservative ones) and make comparisons across the different national contexts. In accordance with this goal, the thesis compares four nationalist-populist parties in order to establish how far they espouse common concerns and to discern whether there is an East-West divide (two of the parties chosen are from the CEE and two from NWE).

¹² Torreblanca, Jose Ignacio and Mark Leonard. *The Continent-Wide Rise of Euroscepticism* (2013), p. 1.

¹³ Mondon, Aurélien. *The Front National in the Twenty-First Century: From Pariah to Republican Democratic Contender*, Workshop on the Nationalistic Right at the University of Bath, 1 February 2013.

¹⁴ Grice, Andrew. *Handbagged! David Cameron's promise of EU referendum by 2017 provokes storm of controversy*, *Independent newspaper*, 24 January 2013.

The thesis contributes to two bodies of scholarly literature, since nationalist-populist parties could be studied in two contexts – firstly because they are members of party families within the EU that have a track record of elevating nationalism to the apex of political expression and secondly because they also reflect and contribute to the discourses in their own nation-states. The East vs. West comparisons are relevant because they have been relatively understudied within the scholarship on nationalist-populist parties, especially using qualitative methodology. However, a qualitative approach is essential in order to understand why parties from across Europe may differ from one another significantly. For example, the Bulgarian Ataka, the German REP, the British UKIP, and the Slovakian HZDS are sometimes subsumed under the generic heading of “populist radical right” by scholars, but the precise nature of their Euroscepticism, i.e. regarding the degree to which they view the EU as negatively affecting their electoral prospects or threats to identity, may be markedly different.¹⁶ Finally, there has been a notable absence of works exclusively focusing on the critical evaluation of “minority empowerment” and “Euronationalism” as triggers of Euroscepticism, especially in a cross-country comparative fashion.

The thesis pays special attention to East-West comparisons. These seem fruitful not only because Europeanization has been experienced differently on different sides of the continent, but also because the two halves of Europe have very divergent immigration histories. Germany and the Netherlands have seen strong immigration waves since the 1960s, which has not been the case in Bulgaria and Romania, now source countries of emigration to other EU states. One intriguing facet that is compared is the degree to which the historical national minorities in these CEE states like Hungarians and Turks provide the same type of ammunition to nationalist-populists that the relatively recent settler immigrants offer to the

¹⁵ Taggart, Paul. A touchstone of dissent: Euroscepticism in contemporary Western European party systems (1998), p. 366.

¹⁶ Liang, Christina. *Europe for Europeans: the Foreign and Security Policy of the Populist Radical Right* (2007), pp. 295-298.

rightist parties in Western Europe. Furthermore, at least since the end of the Second World War, there has been an attempt in Western Europe to overcome ethnic nationalism, while the process of transforming ethnic nationalist expression into civic ones has not reached the same stage in Eastern Europe. More stringent conditionality in the CEE realm has also arguably contributed to Euroscepticism in that part of the continent.

The thesis is organized into seven chapters. **Chapter One** introduces the main concepts used in the thesis and surveys the relevant literature. After looking briefly at the different understandings of Europeanization and Euroscepticism, it dedicates more specific attention to the literature covering the nature of the Euroscepticism of nationalist-populist parties in both Western and Eastern Europe. It explains how key concepts will be used in the thesis and identifies the main gaps in the literature which the thesis hopes to fill. Essentially, Chapter One prepares the ground for the rest of the thesis by providing some general indications as to why nationalist-populist resentments (related to the empowerment of anti-nationalist forces) could logically be viewed as attributable to certain Europeanization processes, or whether in fact (as the literature reviewed in Chapter One partly suggests) such resentments could (a) be based on ill-founded perceptions (since ethno-regionalist actors do not unequivocally benefit from Europeanization) and (b) might in fact be linked to a Euroscepticism which stems to some extent from causes completely unconnected to the privileging of minorities. **Chapter Two** examines a number of further issue clusters (in addition to minority empowerment, discussed in Chapter One). These clusters are highly salient from the standpoint of nationalists – new loci of identification challenging exclusively national attachments (Pan-European nationalism), transformations of citizenship regulations and altered migration dynamics. The EU impacts on each of these realms are thoroughly analyzed and it is indicated why certain negative trends (if viewed through a nationalist lens) in relation to these

three key areas could be blamed on the influences of the EU. **Chapter Three** introduces the four countries that will be analyzed as part of the empirical work. They are characterized by divergent experiences of nationalism, different framings of Europeanism throughout their histories and various ways in which the interactions between majority and minority groups are structured due to certain institutional features and underlying norms. The rationale for choosing these four states (as well as the specific political parties to be analyzed) is outlined, with some of the reasons revolving around the nature of majority-minority relations and the type of Euroscepticism typical of these countries. **Chapter Four** (the first empirical chapter) presents an analysis of the in-depth interviews, focusing on the sections on the perceived effects of Euronationalism on each nation-state. Some of these touched upon the matter directly (the interrelationship between national and European identity) while others were more indirect (i.e. revealed through the respondents' rationale for opposing EU enlargement or views on "core" countries within the EU). As in the previous chapter, additional non-interview material is included in order to supplement the empirical findings and augment the final analysis. **Chapter Five** (the second empirical chapter) covers the parties' perceptions of the EU influence on immigration and citizenship provisions within countries – disparate issue areas ranging from appraisals of the EU agencies' efforts to aid nation-states in combatting immigration to the undercutting of the primacy of national citizenship regulations are put under scrutiny. The section enumerating the EU-attributable immigration impacts strikes a balance between interview and written party materials, while the citizenship section has been compiled by drawing almost exclusively on data derived from interviews. In the case of the CEE countries, brief attention is also devoted to the perceived effects of EU membership on current emigration flows as well as future trends. **Chapter Six** (the final empirical chapter) deals exclusively with the analysis of the "minority empowerment" theme, drawing primarily on insights gleaned from the interviews, interweaving them with information obtained from

other sources. It also briefly touches upon the perceived EU influences on the promotion of multiculturalism (regarded as conceptually distinct from minority empowerment by the interviewees) within countries. **Chapter Seven** (the concluding one) brings together all the analytical conclusions, discussing the divergences and similarities identified. In particular, it draws out the cross-regional (Eastern vs. Western) comparisons that emerged from the empirical research. Finally, the chapter sketches out some of the implications in the realm of theory and policy that could be manifested as a result of this research. For instance, the concluding part of this thesis suggests that it may be worth probing whether there is a significant overlap between the ideologies of “mainstream right” and “fringe right” parties in relation to their assessments of EU impacts on majority-minority relations.

Research Methodology

Explanation and rationale for selecting the methodology

Having provided an overview of the issues that will be put to the test, this introductory chapter details the methodology employed in order to provide an answer to the research questions. The approach adopted with regard to the field work was a qualitative one and mainly involved the administering of semi-structured interviews to members of nationalist-populist parties (with a supplementary analysis of written documents like party manifestos or relevant works authored by party members). I aimed to interview a variety of significant party members (ranging from party leaders to representatives at the regional level or in the European Parliament) and I believe that I managed to obtain information from a cross-section of influential functionaries in the case of each party as well as benefit from a “sufficiently diverse sample” (in terms of positions occupied within the party and familiarity with different regions in each of the countries in question). The reason for deciding to settle on conducting semi-structured interviews as the best way to illuminate the issues that will be explored was mainly due to the relative obscurity of the subject matter in question - few party-based primary or secondary sources deal exclusively with issues such as “Euronationalism”, “minority empowerment” or “promotion of multiculturalism by EU agents” and in any case it would have otherwise been difficult to make an accurate assessment of the importance attached to the EU influences without receiving input from party members. In addition, semi-structured interviews enable the researcher to expand on a given question,¹⁷ which is essential due to the complexity of some of the issue areas touched upon. Also, it was my belief that more honest accounts than those likely to appear in official publications could be provided if

the proper interview ambience was established in a “closed environment” and this indeed turned out to be the case on most occasions. Lastly, semi-structured interviews provide a tradeoff between a measure of control retained by the interviewer and opportunities for the interviewees to put their own spin on the interaction. They are also suitable research tools whenever repeated meetings with the interviewee may not be viable¹⁸ and may help put interviewees at ease by allowing them to bring to light any particular expertise they possess.¹⁹ Some sample questions are shown below:

General Cluster: What is your general view on your country’s membership in the EU and which aspects of EU membership do you deem especially problematic?

Cluster One (EU identity and procedural/normative aspects in relation to nationalism):

How are you disposed toward EU initiatives that aim to crystallize and strengthen the expression of a EU cultural or political identity? Do you regard Pan-European nationalism as a threat to traditional nationalism?

Do you think that the EU plays/has played a role in altering the coalition arrangements in your country to the detriment of your party?

Cluster Two (Europeanization in the case of citizenship, migration, etc.): How has your country’s membership in the European Union affected the regulation of migration from the standpoint of your nation-state?

¹⁷ Peabody, Robert L., Susan Webb Hammond, Jean Torcom, Lynne P. Brown, Carolyn Thompson, and Robin Kolodny. *Interviewing Political Elites* (1990), p. 452.

¹⁸ DiCicco-Bloom, Barbara and Benjamin F. Crabtree. *Making sense of qualitative research* (2006), p. 315.

Cluster Three (Perceived Minority Empowerment): From the perspective of your nation-state, do you think that the EU has altered the status quo in the case of your core group and minority groups? (has it brought about a worsening or improvement in relations between them, has it caused members of minority groups to profit more than those belonging to the majority?)

(For a full list of questions administered, please see Appendix 1 at the end of the thesis)

I decided to settle for the term “Pan-European nationalism” or “Pan-Europeanism” rather than Euronationalism, as the concept of “Euronationalism” was on occasions found to be confusing by the interviewees and “Pan-Europeanism” is potentially a broader term which could refer not only to “identity-generating” activities on the part of the EU institutions, but also to the altered understandings of identity as a result of the interactions among the EU member states themselves (see also Chapter Two for further clarifications).

A high degree of standardization of the question practices across the different national contexts was aimed for, albeit degrees of flexibility was retained, depending on the particular party environment, the preference of the interviewee, as well as certain peculiarities of the national contexts (i.e. questions of “core states” and “equal treatment within the EU” were naturally approached differently and emphasized more in the case of the two Eastern European countries). The emphasis was on the agents’ (policy-makers’) perceptions regarding the Europeanization dynamics in different realms rather than the “reality on the ground” (real objectively documented gains experienced by members of minority groups or reduced local citizens’ attachments to the nation-state as revealed for instance through

¹⁹ Horton, Joanne, Richard Macve and Geert Struyven. Qualitative Research: Experiences in Using Semi-

Eurobarometer surveys), and this work attempted to convey the concerns of the various interviewees as close as possible.

The information gleaned from written sources was integrated together with that obtained as a result of the interviews and as a researcher I assumed the primary responsibility for correctly interpreting the responses of the interviewees.²⁰ Given the time constraints, logistics and secretive nature of some of the parties, I decided to discontinue the process of data gathering once a point of saturation was reached²¹ (in my case after eight interviews for each party were conducted, clear patterns began to be identified pertaining to the respondents' perceptions of the EU influences on their nation-state).

The approach which I adopted was largely a deductive one - a number of rough preliminary hypotheses based on political science and sociological theories provided the blueprint for the research as well as an indication of some of the initial assumptions regarding the presumed differences in perceptions between the agents in the two different regional contexts (Eastern Europe vs. Western Europe).

The first guiding hypothesis - developed as a result of the asymmetries in "majority" vs. "minority" empowerment examined in Chapter One (i.e. the increased empowerment of minorities at the expense of majorities) - was that the majority of nationalist-populist party members would express some degree of disillusionment with the EU due to their perception that it unduly supports minorities, often at their expense. It is elaborated, expanded upon and split into subhypotheses H 1 and H 5 in the concluding part of Chapter Two. As revealed by

Structured Interviews (2004), p. 340.

²⁰ Strauss, Anselm and Juliet Corbin. Grounded Theory Methodology: An Overview (1994), pp. 273-274.

²¹ Coyne, Imelda T. Sampling in qualitative research. Purposeful and theoretical sampling; merging or clear boundaries? (1997), p. 629.

the empirical work, this did not really prove to be the case among the majority of the respondents in the Western European case, but was important to the Romanian and Bulgarian parties.

The second preliminary hypothesis rested on the divergences between the CEE and Western European contexts in relation to political conditionality and historical understandings of nationalism. With regard to Europeanization, the thesis put forward the idea that the specific conditions of EU accession in the CEE realm (like the need for institutional adjustments and prominent role of the EU Commission) triggered Euroscepticism in that region. In particular, the “imposition of minority” discourse by the EU (to use Ralchev’s phrase) through the conditionality mechanisms, is one example of a Europeanization development that has specifically targeted the CEE countries. The historical downplaying of the need for group rights in cases of historical minorities or the limited familiarity with inclusive citizenship regimes is an example of a peculiarly CEE developmental trajectory. In essence, the working assumption was that the EU-induced minority empowerment grievances were more likely to be forcefully and bitterly expressed by CEE populists than their Western counterparts. It reappears in Chapter Two as a slightly reformulated H 2. As the empirical investigations demonstrated, this indeed proved to be the case, though there was an interesting disconnect between perceptions of normative vs. substantive minority gains in the case of two of the countries. Additionally, it was initially predicted that ethnic conceptions of nationalism would figure more prominently in the pronouncements of CEE populists and this guiding assumption was also sustained.

The third working hypothesis was that more recently we might be witnessing a process of convergence between East and West regarding the ways in which issues pertaining to

nationalism are approached, now that the accession process is over for the A10 member-states and because majority nationalist expression has become more acceptable in Western Europe. Karen Henderson (2008) predicts that a certain convergence between the CEE and Western European party dynamics in relation to Euroscepticism will occur at some point in the future. She remarks that “[eventually it would] become far easier to classify Euroscepticism on a pan-European basis”.²² This guiding assumption is further fleshed out and is labeled as H 6 at the end of Chapter Two. The thesis attempted to solve one small piece of the puzzle in relation to this conundrum and the paper’s conclusion demonstrated that cross-Europe party convergence predictions do not really ring true with regard to some of the specific sub-strands of Euroscepticism examined.

In addition, Chapter Two introduces two additional hypotheses (H 3 and H 4) extracted from the literature review analysis of EU level interactions with national identity; national regulatory mechanisms with regard to immigration; and criteria for citizenship acquisition within nation-states.

The fact that some hypotheses were proposed before undertaking the actual empirical research did not lead to premature closure – I still allowed myself flexibility in interpreting the findings and on occasions made references to scholarly studies not cited in the theory chapters of the literature review in order to make sense of the incoming empirical data.²³ This is largely reflective of the reality that PhD research cannot always progress in a perfectly linear or top-down fashion, especially given that the serendipity factor needs to be taken into account. In fact it may not be advisable to assume that such linearity is achievable.²⁴

²² Henderson, Karen. *Exceptionalism or Convergence? Euroscepticism and Party Systems in Central and Eastern Europe* (2008), p. 125.

²³ Strauss, Anselm and Juliet Corbin. *Grounded Theory Methodology: An Overview* (1994), pp. 273-274.

Barriers experienced as a researcher – logistical, linguistic, cultural, and institutional

While I was ultimately successful in obtaining insights from a sufficient number of influential members of all four parties, there were a number of barriers that needed to be overcome.

The biggest issue encountered was gaining access and “selling” my research by explaining my motivation for pursuing such studies in a way that could be related to by the politicians from these parties. The difficulties with regard to finding willing interviewees were traceable to the busy and at times unpredictable schedules of the politicians, their position within the party hierarchy (necessitating the approval of the party leader or other senior members in case of lower-ranked functionaries), gatekeeping issues (unwillingness of junior members to grant me access to more senior ones), language barriers (applicable to the Romanian context and to an extent to the Dutch one), and lack of interest in the topic and general reluctance to participate (mostly a problem in the Romanian and Dutch cases). In addition, a few members I contacted (2 PVV functionaries, 2 REP representatives, 3 PRM politicians) did not feel sufficiently knowledgeable regarding the European Union and its impacts on the nation-state, so they advised me to approach their colleagues from the respective national parliaments or the European Parliament. I encountered this obstacle quite frequently when dealing with the PVV and at times this contributed to creating a vicious circle, because European Parliament members are generally difficult to approach and there are not as many of them to choose from. However, I was able to eventually resolve these issues and find members who were interested in sharing their views, while at the same time exhibiting sufficient familiarity with the workings of the EU.

²⁴ Peabody, Robert L., Susan Webb Hammond, Jean Torcom, Lynne P. Brown, Carolyn Thompson and Robin

Furthermore, my own position as a student (rather than an academic) equipped me with certain advantages and disadvantages. On occasions it worked against me because the assumption on the part of the politicians was that I could not assume a “superior” vantage point, so the interaction would not result in legitimacy dividends for them or enhance their understanding of the underlying issues. On the other hand, I may have had an easier time due to being able to portray myself as a relatively naïve student researcher, who did not possess ulterior agendas connected to causing additional negative publicity for the party members. The “exotic” nature of my request or genuine curiosity may have also worked in my favour. It needs to be noted that the disadvantages were certainly most pronounced in the case of the PVV party.

Moreover, my national background also proved to be a double-edged sword – on the one hand, it made everything less complicated in the Bulgarian and German cases (in the latter instance, the historically amicable relations between Bulgaria and Germany as well as the lesser relevancy of the “CEE migration” frame may have played a contributing role). From the standpoint of Ataka, this resulted in gains, as I was viewed as a co-ethnic and there was thus a greater willingness to lend a helping hand, though one member jokingly implied that I was rather Westernized for a Bulgarian. REP members were also quite well-disposed towards me (and Bulgaria) and did not appear apprehensive about offering their opinions on the issues at hand. By contrast, my “Bulgarian” identity was almost certainly a complicating factor with regard to being able to put the Romanian and especially the Dutch politicians at ease. In the latter case, it is quite likely that the PVV’s awareness of my national origin may have predisposed their party members to view it as odd that I would be approaching them to talk about Euroscepticism issues, given the prominent place occupied by the anti-Eastern

Kolodny. *Interviewing Political Elites* (1990), p. 454.

European rhetoric in party manifestos and the party leader's pronouncements. It is not out of the question that a number of Dutch students were also taken by surprise due to my interest in the PVV and felt ill-placed to become intermediaries (one Dutch academic whom I contacted remarked that PVV members are notoriously difficult to get an interview with, while former VVD-affiliated Dutch politician Jan-Kees Wiebenga who used to be one of my lecturers at Leiden University during the 2009/2010 academic year did not have any acquaintances from the PVV apart from the party leader and described Wilders as "virtually unreachable") – this is discussed in more detail in the ethics section.

However, once I gained access to the interviewees, my national identity was not a variable that could be said to have significantly affected the nature of the revelations or the interview ambience. For instance, while PVV members remained friendly and cordial, they did not avoid talking about Bulgarian-related issues.

Lastly, a few words may be in order with regard to the language matters. As a native Bulgarian speaker, I did not have too many issues making translations from English to Bulgarian and vice versa and was especially careful that no nuances were lost in translation. Similarly, I managed to conduct all my interviews with German members in German. I have limited knowledge of the Dutch language (though I studied for a year in Leiden and can understand simple written Dutch), but all the PVV members were fluent in English, so there were no serious problems here either. Romania was the most challenging country linguistically, because familiarity with the English language was noticeably lower among PRM members, though the interviews that I conducted in English went smoothly and for the rest I managed to get in touch with Romanian university students who helped me out as interpreters – they used to be enrolled at local universities as humanities or linguistics

students and I made sure to go over all the concepts and questions with them prior to conducting the interviews. I also learned some Romanian in order to conduct the research (and could draw on my prior knowledge of the French language which is within the same language family), so I was able to understand political texts in Romanian with some aid from Romanian friends.

Note regarding applicability of findings

While it would not be viable to discuss the findings in terms of statistical significance, as I did not employ any quantitative methods, my use of semi-structured interviews as a qualitative method was well-suited for the in-depth investigation of the perceptions and precise argumentations of the nationalist-populist members. I feel that the questions were sufficiently open-ended to allow the politicians to freely express their views on a variety of Europeanization-related topics. While bigger samples are always desirable, this would not have been viable in the case of these parties and on most topics the saturation point was reached once the sixth or seventh interview was over and obvious patterns with regard to the themes analyzed could be identified. In addition, there were no outright contradictions among party members with regard to the responses provided – the PRM possibly being the only exception with one member (Țîrnea) describing himself as “Eurooptimist” and another one (Funar) labeling himself as “very Eurosceptic”.

Finally, the ideology of such parties is in a constant state of flux in addition to a frequent turnover in personnel. Ataka and the REP in particular have had to contend with many defections over the course of the last three years. Therefore it may be wise to consider these findings as having shed light only on the period between 2011 and 2013, and - although representing important kernels of truth for the parties as a whole - still not providing the full picture.

Ethical Issues

On the whole, my thesis focused on parties that are viewed as controversial and beyond the mainstream in their own countries and also by international actors. While these are not the type of parties whose members are likely to be involved in any illegal activities, the nature of their rhetoric and policy suggestions cause them to occupy a very particular niche in their states of origin.

Ethical concerns raised by this study largely relate to my obligations to respondents and the effects of the research process on them. From the standpoint of academic integrity as well as fairness to the interviewees, the accuracy of the information presented is vital. I believe that I managed to achieve that, as I have been able to go over the recordings multiple times (most interviews were taped) and also succeeded in clarifying any ambiguous pronouncements during the actual interviews as well as after they had been concluded. In addition, I made sure to thoroughly review any notes taken in the immediate aftermath of the few interviews which I was unable to record.

In terms of the actual questions posed, I made sure to craft them in such a way that they were not likely to be regarded as charged, provocative or repetitive and thus trigger negative reactions and outbursts that could spoil the interview ambience. During the actual interviews, there were no problems with respondents feeling aggrieved or unwilling to answer questions, so feelings of rapport were retained with all the interviewees. In the German context, I stayed clear of Nazism-related topics, but two of the interviewees broached the subject themselves while pondering issues pertaining to “political correctness” in contemporary Germany. I refrained from asking direct questions regarding the interviewees’ opinions of what

constitutes and who belongs to the “national community” (for instance, whether non-White Dutch people are accepted as part of the national community or the majority group and whether they subscribe to racial explanations of crime), preferring to obtain such information from other sources. Biological racism topics are likely to be viewed as especially sensitive in the two Western European contexts and it is conceivable that due to my status as an outsider (as well as cultural taboo issues), I would not have received candid answers and would have been envisioned as part of the problem. It is not out of the question that I could have been perceived as someone who was interested in inserting Eastern European understandings of ethnic belonging into a Western European environment. In general, my expectation was that minority-related and immigration questions could set alarm bells ringing among interviewees, but this did not turn out to be an issue (with the exception of one PVV member from the European Parliament, who seemed taken aback by the question). With regard to the pre-interview stage, I made sure to specify the exact nature of my research and provide an indication that the thesis’s emphasis on East-West comparisons in terms of the perceived effects of Europeanization. However, I decided to omit any references to “Euroscepticism” or “opposition to the EU”, settling for the formulation “EU influences on your nation-state in various realms” in order to avoid setting the tone for discussions and branding party members as Eurosceptics from the very outset. Such rigid categorizations are as a rule resented even by committed ideologues. Similarly, I utilized the concept “patriotism” rather than “nationalism”, as the latter term could on occasions be regarded as possessing a chauvinist connotation.

Another ethical issue was connected to offering the interviewees the choice of anonymity. Lower-ranked members in the case of the PVV did not want to have their name mentioned - it is apparently the case that according to inner party regulations, party leader

Geert Wilders needs to grant his permission for any party member's interaction with journalists or academic researchers. The one exception is communication with members of "friendly parties" like the *Vlaams Belang*. It is not out of the question that non-compliant functionaries could face expulsions from the party ranks or become outcasts within the party, so this was certainly a very understandable request and I made sure to respect it. The same problem did not arise in the case of the European Parliament members or regional leaders who readily agreed to be mentioned in the thesis. As for the REP representatives, given that most of the interviews were arranged in a top-down fashion - after first getting in touch with the upper echelons of the party hierarchy (the secretary of the party as well as the actual party leader were really helpful in that regard), all the members (with one exception) willingly agreed to be quoted and have their names appear on the pages of the thesis. I made sure to observe the same protocol in the case of the Ataka and PRM parties, but none of the people interviewed requested anonymity (among Ataka representatives, not a single one of them deemed it necessary to obtain permission from the party leader and did not appear worried regarding the implications of talking to me, while two regional level Romanian members consulted with then party leader Vadim Tudor prior to speaking to me). Unfortunately, it has been virtually impossible to do follow-ups with most of the members interviewed, though the ones that I re-contacted had not reconsidered and were happy to be named in the thesis. I made sure to be as up-front as possible and provided the interviewees with my CV, contact information and a few sample questions prior to meeting them (except in three instances in the Romanian case, when a friend of mine was arranging the interviews).

It is notable that most members did not want to don the mantle of intermediaries and generally did not feel comfortable suggesting other functionaries I could speak to or referring me to their colleagues. Similarly, for a combination of logistical and personal reasons, no

joint interviews were conducted (all of them were one-on-one). I decided not to pressure them and insist on obtaining contact details of other party representatives through the ones I had already interviewed, instead going through many alternative routes in making arrangements – through e-mail communication, contacting conference organizers (where the politicians had appeared to speak in front of an audience), filling out relevant forms on the party websites, and so on. I think that this added to rather than detracted from the thesis, because the phenomenon of “group-think” was less pronounced given that none of the party functionaries had been briefed by their colleagues prior to their actual interaction with me.

In addition to these ethical considerations pertaining to the nationalist-populist politicians, throughout my journey towards completion I became increasingly conscious of the need to do proper research with regard to any potential intermediaries’ political ideology, occupation, social status, and so on. For instance, on one occasion I asked a highly educated Dutch friend who is quite familiar with the Dutch political system for advice in contacting a PVV politician. He was kind enough to put me in touch with a former classmate of his who had previously been employed within the European Commission. However, it turned out that the person in question was not too keen to associate himself with the PVV party in any way, shape, or form and refused to approach party members like their press officers, because he felt that his academic and personal reputation could be put in jeopardy. In his view, such an endeavor would have been futile anyway, as a simple Google search would immediately give the game away, because the PVV party members would find out about his “Europe-hugging ways” and this would make them suspicious of his motives. I certainly got the impression that quite a few of the Dutch university students I was referred to were quite reluctant to “prepare the terrain” prior to me speaking to PVV representatives, though I eventually managed to obtain some help in that regard. I encountered similar issues in Romania and Germany –

some Romanian students were quite apprehensive about contacting the PRM party and advised me to drop the matter altogether and concentrate on other parties, while an Eastern European family I stayed with in Germany was equally wary regarding any sort of interaction with REP representatives (in the latter case, this was not a problem, because the language barrier issue was absent) and were adamant that I should not specify (to REP members) that I was temporarily residing in their house. While Ataka certainly does not enjoy a good reputation in Bulgaria, hardly any of the Bulgarians I talked to were worried about contacting them and they were more likely to laugh them off rather than perceive them as a hostile and dangerous party. In any case, I did not have to seriously rely on intermediaries in the Bulgarian case, given the general ease of approaching Ataka representatives, though it is clear that my own compatriots perceived Ataka as somewhat more mainstream than their counterparts in the other states.

One valuable lesson I learned is that the dynamics of approaching populists are manifestly different compared to those typical of approaching mainstream parties and I need to be more tactful with regard to any requests for assistance in paving the way for an interview, because academics and non-academics may feel intimidated heeding such requests or be slightly suspicious regarding my motives. In essence, to avoid any misunderstandings and causing offence, it is best to be extra careful in selecting intermediaries in the case of such parties. I may have allowed certain stereotypes regarding “liberal political cultures” (with regard to the approachability of politicians) to creep into my mind, because my initial expectation was that I would have a harder time in Eastern than in Western Europe, which generally did not prove to be the case.

A few members from the various parties also requested to read the final copy of my thesis and I will gladly send it to them once it is completed, so that they get the chance to become fully acquainted with the nature of the research.

All in all, I believe that I managed to respect all fundamental ethical considerations while conducting my interviews, and any minor deviations from the originally laid out plan did not affect the nature of the findings.

I now turn to the first part of the literature review, which outlines some of the general ways of conceptualizing Europeanization, the party-based transformations caused by the European Union and the various dimensions of Euroscepticism, on the societal and party level.

Chapter One – Europeanization as a cause of Euroscepticism among nationalist-populist parties

Chapter Introduction

Chapter One lays the groundwork for the principal subject matter in very general terms. It introduces the main concepts used in the thesis and surveys the relevant literature, both the general literature on Europeanization and Euroscepticism and the more specific literature about the Euroscepticism of nationalist-populist parties. It explains how key concepts will be used in the thesis and identifies the main gaps in the literature that this thesis hopes to fill.

1: Europeanization

If Europeanization is understood to mean the impact of the European Union within individual nation-states, “Europeanization research” is a relatively recent undertaking. It reflects the reaching of a stage when actual EU institutions are assumed to have achieved a degree of permanence. Hence scholars are less inclined to focus on the “Brussels processes”, the interplay between European policy-making and European integration. By contrast, in the pioneering years (in the immediate aftermath of the creation of the European communities), theorists tended to be concerned with finding explanations for the dynamics and outcomes of European-level integration processes, with the consequence that the national arena and the

domestic effects of the EU tended to be pushed backstage.²⁵ This could arguably be traced to the conceptualization of the EU as the preserve of international relations due to the still influential realist school of thought, which saw little merit in opening up the “black box” (delving behind the façade of a “unified nation-state” and looking more closely into the differing interests of various stakeholders at the national level).²⁶

The increased level of interest in national level dynamics could also be regarded as a natural development due to the amplified role of the EU and the increased sophistication of the supranational structures. As Boerzel puts it, with the establishment of the Single Market and the European Monetary Union (EMU) propelling the increased delegation of domestic competencies to the European level, EU theorists could no longer afford to ignore the effects of the European Union on the domestic institutions, policies and political processes of the member states.²⁷ Hooghe and Marks draw attention to the “exponential increase in political mobilization” around EU issues of citizens, parties and interest groups specializing in transnational activities during the years between 1985 and 1995.²⁸

In the sphere of politics, in a parallel development, there are grounds to claim that the “empowerment of the EU” has coincided with the increased attention paid to issues like multiculturalism and migrant integration by national governments and a certain “nationalization” of politics in EU member states like Germany and the UK, in the sense of more focus on the perceived importance of national identity. Consequently, the EU level could no longer be considered as epiphenomenal when it came to debates focused on “pressing national issues”, at least from the perspective of nationalist-minded actors. In this

²⁵ Kutter, Amelie and Vera Trappmann (eds.). *Das Erbe des Beitritts – Europäisierung in Mittel-und Osteuropa (The Legacy of Membership – Europeanization in Central and Eastern Europe)* (2006), p. 99. (also cited in Dandolov, Philip. Nationalist-populist parties and the EU: attitudes and their determinants (pragmatic and/or ideological), 2010).

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Boerzel, Tanja A. How the European Union interacts with its member states (2003), pp. 11-12.

²⁸ Hooghe, Liesbet and Gary Marks. *Multi-level governance and European integration* (2001), p. 126.

regard, a Report of the Group of Eminent Persons of the Council of Europe - from May 2011 - suggests that a “wave of radical populism” is currently a major feature of the political landscape throughout Europe²⁹ and also highlights the increasing role played by the EU institutions in provoking such nationalism, e.g. as evidenced by the efforts to develop comprehensive strategies when it comes to the treatment of the Roma populations within certain EU countries.³⁰

The phenomenon of Europeanization is multifaceted and “inter-subjective meanings” tend to be attached to it.³¹ For instance, the term has sometimes been used historically and equated with the diffusion of “European culture” through colonialism³² or regarded as synonymous with the EU enlargement process³³ or with the spread of conflict resolution models, associated with the EU’s soft power. However, this thesis will use the term in a strictly contemporary fashion and mostly in relation to the impacts of policy processes emanating from the EU level.

More specifically, a twofold understanding of Europeanization will be employed throughout this thesis. On the one hand, drawing on the rational institutionalist approach, *Europeanization will be conceptualized as the way the domestic impacts of the EU play out in terms of redistributing resources among domestic actors.*³⁴ In essence, the primary focus will be on identifying which actors are empowered due to EU directives, EU changes to party structures, and so on, with nationalist-populist stakeholders and their natural opponents – ethnoregionalist or minority groups and parties - given special attention. On the other hand, by adopting a more normative frame, *Europeanization will also be understood as the way in*

²⁹ Report of the Group of Eminent Persons of the Council of Europe. Living together – Combining Diversity and Freedom in 21st-century Europe (2011), p. 19.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 52.

³¹ Matonyte, Irmina and Vaidas Morkevicius. Threat Perception and European Identity Building: the Case of Elites in Belgium, Germany, Lithuania and Poland (2009), p. 968.

³² Sittermann, Birgit. Europeanization – a Step forward in understanding Europe? (2005), p. 3.

³³ Olsen, Johan P. The many faces of Europeanization (2002), p. 923. (also cited in Dandolov, Philip. Nationalist-populist parties and the EU: attitudes and their determinants (pragmatic and/or ideological), 2010).

*which the EU institutions encourage adherence to EU norms on the part of main national actors (e.g. those in government) and how this affects certain concerns that lie close to the heart of nationalist-oriented actors.*³⁵

From a historical standpoint, two rough distinctions could be seen as typifying the study of Europeanization processes. The historical institutionalist approach, which is frequently adopted in the literature on governance,³⁶ depicts the EU as being dominant over and having the capability to dictate to the nation-state.³⁷ Thus, domestic changes in nation-states are regarded as responses to adaptive pressures, emanating from the EU level.³⁸ The sociological institutionalist approach,³⁹ which in the 1990s was somewhat neglected in the field of governance studies,⁴⁰ places a premium on the examination of the role of “softer” forms of EU integration like open coordination methods and benchmarking. Accordingly, it tends to downplay the importance of the “hard” and more legalistic EU instruments. The EU is put on a more or less equal footing with the nation-states and is described as a moderator or facilitator, rather than as a hegemon.⁴¹

In accordance with these approaches, a similar (though not identical) distinction is made between the direct and indirect impacts of Europeanization. Europeanization could be rather direct if European policies are very prescriptive in their character and urge for the adoption of specific measures in order for the national legislation to be in line with the EU requirements.

³⁴ Kutter, Amelie and Vera Trappmann (eds.). *Das Erbe des Beitritts – Europäisierung in Mittel-und Osteuropa (The Legacy of Membership – Europeanization in Central and Eastern Europe)* (2006), p. 104.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 105.

³⁶ Jenson, Jane and Frédéric Mérand. *Sociology, institutionalism and the European Union* (2010), p. 77.

³⁷ Historical institutionalism and rational choice institutionalism are sometimes regarded as representing distinct strands, with the former more empirically-grounded and the latter focused on generating theories. (in Kathleen Thelen. *Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics*, 1999, pp. 372-373).

³⁸ Bache, Ian. *Europeanization – a Governance Approach* (2003), p. 6.

³⁹ The term “constructivist institutionalism” is sometimes also utilized as synonymous with “sociological institutionalism”. (in Jane Jenson and Frédéric Mérand. *Sociology, institutionalism and the European Union*, 2010, pp. 76, 78).

⁴⁰ Jenson, Jane and Frédéric Mérand. *Sociology, institutionalism and the European Union* (2010), p. 77.

On the other hand, Europeanization could also exhibit rather indirect effects (lack any direct institutional impacts) by cognitive reshaping of domestic beliefs and expectations or framing mechanisms.⁴² Dominant domestic advocacy coalitions are sometimes created around EU issues and they try to pre-empt European legislation by pressuring national governments to make appropriate policy choices.⁴³ The direct impacts of Europeanization are more likely to be observed in cases of “positive integration”, for instance environmental protection, health and safety work standards, and so on.⁴⁴ One of the main reasons for that is the need to reduce the negative externalities that could affect all members within the Union.⁴⁵

Thus, as elucidated above, for the purposes of this thesis, I will combine both approaches and probe the various stakeholders’ perceptions when it comes to both direct and indirect impacts of the EU. Europeanization will not be regarded as solely being a top-down process - set in motion due to the coercive powers residing in EU structures, but also as a bottom-up one – triggered by non-hierarchical EU effects like social learning on the part of domestic actors. However, given the broad nature of the topic, I will also draw on other theories from outside the EU studies field where appropriate.

Another note on my own take on the concept may be in order here. While I acknowledge the validity and academic utility of the historical and cultural definitions of Europeanization, as outlined above, for the sake of avoiding unnecessary conceptual stretching and given my interest in bringing to light the nationalist-populist parties’ appraisals of specific contemporary EU policy impacts rather than pondering historical linkages or institutional path dependencies, my own definition of Europeanization is modeled the most

⁴¹ Kutter, Amelie and Vera Trappmann (eds.). *Das Erbe des Beitritts – Europäisierung in Mittel-und Osteuropa*” (*The Legacy of Membership – Europeanization in Central and Eastern Europe*) (2006), p. 105.

⁴² Knill, Christoph and Dirk Lehmkuhl. The national impact of European Union regulatory policy: three Europeanization mechanisms (2002), p. 257.

⁴³ Ibid, p. 263.

⁴⁴ Ibid, pp. 257-258.

⁴⁵ Knill, Christoph and Dirk Lehmkuhl. How Europe matters. Different Mechanisms of Europeanization (1999), p. 2.

closely after Olsen's understanding of the phenomenon as "the central penetration of national system of governance".⁴⁶ In essence, Europeanization is conceptualized as an ongoing process that has explicitly ushered in a sophisticated division of powers (and continues to bring about further complexity) between a number of governance levels – local, national and supranational – and across policy domains. This definition is consistent with one of my principal research interests, which is to account for the exact ways in which the power differential between majority and minority groups is perceived to have shifted in accordance with specific EU policies on minorities or EU-orchestrated "minority rights regimes", with the nation-state increasingly having been taken out of the equation. In that regard, I treat Europeanization as the EU's gradual supplanting of the role of the nation-state, resulting in the blurring of the boundaries between what constitutes "authentic national" and what could be labeled as "authentic European" policy. Thus, the dissertation indirectly tests the degree to which nationalist-populist members are able to separate "national" and "European" policies (and their impacts) within "nationally relevant" fields, and the extent to which this difficulty in correctly identifying the generators of policies is in itself a source of frustration for populists. As revealed in Chapter Six, the inherent ambiguity as to which actor (the EU or the nation-state) is in charge when it comes to the making of policy, is identified by some interviewees (e.g. in the German context) as a possible catalyst of minority empowerment due to entrenching the perception of a weak nation-state. Another caveat when it comes to my own understanding of Europeanization, as implied above, is that I confine it to the realm of "high politics" (policy domains that are fundamentally tied to national understandings of identity and society and for which populist actors are likely to insist that the nation-state remains the sole guardian). As subsequently clarified in Chapter Two, in accordance with this aim, I only analyze the transformed playing fields in the case of immigration and citizenship,

⁴⁶ Olsen, Johan P. *The Many Faces of Europeanization* (2002), pp. 923-924.

the durability of national identities in a Pan-European environment and minority empowerment. To provide an example of what Europeanization is not (from the standpoint of this particular research endeavor), the EU's transformation of national understandings (on the level of the academic community or policy-makers) of what constitutes "best environmental practices" is not considered to warrant the label "Europeanization", as it is not very likely to be envisioned as a priority issue area by nationalists and have the potential to inflame public opinion, on which nationalist-populist party members could attempt to capitalize.

Also, with regard to the multitude of party actors, it is undoubtedly the case that Europeanization may have a vastly different connotation – for instance, mainstream parties consider a "Europeanized" political grouping to be one which behaves in accordance with "European values", is transparent in terms of its internal decision-making and is politically responsible by providing workable policy suggestions, while for the populists a party in governance is usually automatically assumed to be "Europeanized" and interested in pursuing non-national agendas. Thus, while over the course of the field work, I avoid unequivocally referring to the term "Europeanization", I do tease out some of its manifestations based on the nationalist-populist members' rhetoric on the issues at hand.

2: Europeanization Impacts

This second section of the chapter looks into the influences emanating from the EU level on party and interest group actors, taking account of both institutional and normative transformations. The primary interest lies in uncovering the changes ushered in by Europeanization from the point of view of stakeholders particularly interested in identity issues (promoting the interests of either “core” or “minority” constituents): i.e. the nationalist-populist parties and their “opponents”.

2.1 Europeanization and general influences on political parties

The effects of the EU on party structures have generally been understudied compared to other aspects of Europeanization. The bulk of analyses on this subject matter have emerged since the late 1990s. To an extent this is attributable to the “permissive consensus”, seen as typifying European integration, as well as the relative weakness of the European Parliament or EP (in institutional terms) in previous periods. The term “permissive consensus” is used in slightly different ways in the literature, but generally implies the existence of a politically passive general public, which has been kept isolated from the EU level developments by the national elites.⁴⁷ I plan to use this term with reference to the CEE countries in the pre-accession period. The primary EU focus, especially during the first three decades after the creation of the European Communities, was on market integration. The EU legal order reflected this, as it was chiefly concerned with adjudicating disputes of an economic nature between firms.⁴⁸ Scholars generally cite the Maastricht Treaty as the cut-off point between the end of the “permissive consensus” era and the ushering in of the “constraining dissensus”

⁴⁷ Hooghe, Liesbet and Gary Marks. *A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus* (2008), pp. 5-6.

period. The latter is a generic term that captures the increase in trepidations pertaining to European integration among national-level actors, including political parties.⁴⁹ Political parties that are in opposition to national governments can feel particularly frustrated by their difficulties in influencing decision-making on the EU level.

Political parties remain pivotal vehicles for explaining policy processes in the field of EU studies. They represent the prime linkage between the institutions of government like the European Council, the Council of Ministers and the EP and the national electorate.⁵⁰

As will be further touched upon in following sections of the thesis, political parties are different creatures in comparison to interest groups and civil society organizations, and in some respects are less influential than the latter vis-à-vis the EU. In Poguntke's words, "national parties do not have direct resources that are generated by the EU and which are considered crucial to their existence or core activities".⁵¹ Furthermore, in the case of the EU level, interest groups are perceived to have lobby targets that are essentially equivalent to the actors they concentrate on at the national level and thus are usually in a position to lobby according to the "normal rules of the game". During the 1990s, a plethora of interest groups set up their own offices in Brussels. Despite the rise of lobbying at the EU level, the importance of national routes for interest groups has actually been amplified since they started to actively engage at the EU level. There are indications that national governments have become more responsive to the demands of interest groups. Due to national interest groups' intricate knowledge of the EU environment, they are regarded as valuable information-providers about the EU from the perspective of national government staff. In

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 5.

⁴⁹ Steenbergen, Marco R., Erica E. Edwards, and Catherine E. de Vries. *Who's Cueing Whom? Mass-Elite Linkages and the Future of European Integration* (2007), p. 14. (also cited in Dandolov, Philip. *Nationalist-populist parties and the EU: attitudes and their determinants (pragmatic and/or ideological)*, 2010).

⁵⁰ Ladrech, Robert. *Europeanization and Political Parties* (2009), pp. 4-5.

⁵¹ Poguntke, Thomas, Nicholas Aylott, Robert Ladrech, and Kurt Richard Luther. *The Europeanization of national party organizations: a conceptual analysis* (2007), p. 750. (also cited in Dandolov, Philip. *Nationalist-populist parties and the EU: attitudes and their determinants (pragmatic and/or ideological)*, 2010).

short, national interest groups seeking to influence EU-wide policy decisions are still rather likely to direct their attention to national governments – which have access to the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER), and governments’ willingness to accommodate their concerns has increased.⁵²

However, the downside from the perspective of political parties is that for them, unlike lobby groups, there is no such natural continuity from the national to the European level and they are often forced to switch to another approach in the European context.⁵³ At the EU level, political parties are not necessarily as influential as they are in national fora, as in the EU they face much stiffer competition. The parties are forced to defend their niche against national governments and a multitude of interest groups, as well as the business sector. Moreover, the European party groups, which might be expected to provide a common platform for like-minded parties to defend common positions, often fail to do so, as they are more sharply divided in comparison to their nation-state counterparts due to the different national backgrounds of their members and for ideological reasons.

Two groups of party actors are gauged to be the most likely to benefit from the process of Europeanization of national political parties. Firstly, the “executive bias” of EU decision-making is seen as reaping dividends for party elites in general. The findings of the Europeanization of National Political Parties (ENPP), a three-year research project (2004-2006) on the EU impacts on national party organization, undertaken by the Keele European Parties Research Unit, led to the hypothesis that the privileged position of party elites in government vis-à-vis EU decision-making bodies such as the Council of Ministers and the European Council, combined with the resources of their national bureaucracy, as well as their delegation in the COREPER in Brussels, would translate into greater power (measured as a greater autonomy in decision-making and less accountability to the rest of their party).

⁵² Klüver, Heike. Europeanization of Lobbying Activities: when National Interest Groups Spill over to the

Pridham speaks of the recent creation of a European multiparty elite, which is usually closely aligned with party structures on the domestic level.⁵⁴ Ladrech and Mair identify EU influences as having brought about constraints on national policy-making by the limiting of policy space available to competing parties, a reduction in the policy instruments at the disposal of national governments and a limiting of the policy repertoire.⁵⁵ Mair cautions that the continued Europeanization of the party environment could transform all elections (not just the European ones) into second-order contests due to them no longer being likely to be regarded as “true national elections”, because of the EU’s pervasive influence over the nation-state.⁵⁶ Pridham advances the argument by drawing attention to the Eastern side of the continent and the tendency (during the 1990s) of newly emerged CEE party elites to desperately strive for acceptance by transnational party families, and attempt to socialize themselves to the EU environment, even if potentially alienating their supporters.⁵⁷ Transnational party federations are gauged to have played an especially prominent role in the CEE realm in terms of contributing towards programmatic development and campaign guidance in addition to ideological shifts.⁵⁸ In the case of CEE countries, to use Enyedi’s formulation, “parties do not simply adapt to the process of European integration: they are part of it from the very beginning”⁵⁹ because the aspiration of joining the EU is seen to have predated the actual consolidation of political parties (in the aftermath of the collapse of the communist system of governance).⁶⁰ In essence, the EU membership target brought about a

European level (2010), pp. 177-178.

⁵³ Ladrech, Robert. *Europeanization and Political Parties* (2009), p. 10.

⁵⁴ Pridham, Geoffrey. *European Party Cooperation and Post-Communist Politics: Euroscepticism in Transnational Perspective* (2008), p. 14.

⁵⁵ Mair, Peter. *Political Parties and Party Systems* (2006), pp. 160-161.

⁵⁶ Ladrech, Robert. *Europeanization and Political Parties* (2009), p. 10.

⁵⁷ Pridham, Geoffrey. *Complying with the European Union’s Democratic Conditionality: Transnational Party Linkages and Regime Change in Slovakia, 1993-1998* (1999), p. 1225.

⁵⁸ Ladrech, Robert. *Europeanization and political parties* (2009), p. 10.

⁵⁹ Enyedi, Zsolt. *The ‘Europeanisation’ of Eastern Central European Party Systems* (2007), p. 65. (also cited in Dandolov, Philip. *Nationalist-populist parties and the EU: attitudes and their determinants (pragmatic and/or ideological)*, 2010).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

moderation in discourses among CEE parties and contributed to a climate of “permissive consensus” surrounding the EU.⁶¹

In both Western and Eastern Europe, “EU-specialists” (individuals for whom EU affairs was their sole or major brief like the Members of the European Parliament or MEPs) have also been regarded as beneficiaries of the “greater autonomy/less accountability” equation.⁶²

However, despite the further distancing of the party leadership when in government from the rest of the party, as outlined above, it appears that intra-party organizational dynamics have remained essentially static. ENPP party reviews challenge the assertion that the EU has induced an organizational adaptation of any substantial merit. This outcome has been attributed to the fact that national parties’ strategic concerns like vote-maximization and office-seeking have remained mostly untouched by EU policy debates and struggles.⁶³ The impact of the EU on national parties has sometimes been characterized as indirect by definition, as the EU is rarely an attractive opportunity structure and parties are not in any way legally obliged to interact with the EU institutions or engage in activities at the EU level. EU regulations prohibit the transfer of funds to national parties (no matter the source).⁶⁴ However, Europe has also inevitably emerged as a new dimension in party competition.⁶⁵

Nonetheless, one might expect that, given their focus on territorial identities and minority rights, ethnoregionalist parties (the natural opponents of the nationalist-populists) would be more directly touched by Europeanization than other parties. In fact, they have been

⁶¹ Ladrech, Robert. *Europeanization and political parties* (2009), pp. 10-11. (also cited in Dandolov, Philip. *Nationalist-populist parties and the EU: attitudes and their determinants* (pragmatic and/or ideological), 2010).

⁶² Poguntke, Thomas, Nicholas Aylott, Robert Ladrech, and Kurt Richard Luther. *The Europeanization of national party organizations: a conceptual analysis* (2007), p. 751.

⁶³ Ladrech, Robert. *National Political Parties and European Governance: the Consequences of ‘Missing in Action’* (2007), p. 948.

⁶⁴ Ladrech, Robert. *Europeanization and political parties* (2009), p. 7. (also cited in Dandolov, Philip. *Nationalist-populist parties and the EU: attitudes and their determinants* (pragmatic and/or ideological), 2010).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

characterized as the “most actively Europeanized” national parties.⁶⁶ The next section will examine the case of ethnoregionalist parties in particular.

2.2 Europeanization and ethnoregionalist parties

With the exception of small countries such as Luxemburg or Malta, every European state has regionalist parties.⁶⁷ According to Strmiska (2002), ethno-regionalist parties could be viewed as a sub-group of regionalist parties.⁶⁸ Other types of nationalism could be attributable to economic or geographic concerns and not reflect ethnic considerations.⁶⁹ There are many definitions of ethnoregionalist parties, but it can generally be assumed that an ethnoregionalist party represents the interests of particular peripheral (often geographically concentrated) minorities within a nation-state. Its demands could range from a push for outright secession for the region in question to the granting of more rights, e.g. entailing extra seats in a National Assembly, financial incentives that could support development projects within the region, and so on.⁷⁰ Some examples of ethnoregionalist parties in Europe today include the *Südtiroler Volkspartei* in Italy (Southern Europe), *Plaid Cymru* in the UK (Western Europe), the *Svenska folkpartiet i Finland* (Northern Europe),⁷¹ and the *Romániai Magyar Demokrata Szövetség* in Romania (CEE).⁷² Ethno-regionalist parties that are considered right-wing and anti-immigrant like the Belgian *Vlaams Belang* are sometimes

⁶⁶ Spirova, Maria. The EP elections as an arena for Ethnic Minority Representation: Evidence from new EU member states (2010), pp. 5-10.

⁶⁷ Dandoy, Regis. Ethno-regionalist parties in Europe: a typology (2010), p. 196.

⁶⁸ Strmiska, Maxmilián. A Study on Conceptualisation of (Ethno) regional parties (2002), pp. 2-3.

⁶⁹ Dandoy, Regis. Ethno-regionalist parties in Europe: a typology (2010), p. 197.

⁷⁰ De Winter, Liewen. The Impact of European Integration on Ethnoregionalist Parties (2001), p. 4.

⁷¹ Gordin, Jorge P. The Electoral Fate of Ethnoregionalist Parties in Western Europe: a Boolean Test of Extant Explanations (2001), pp. 151-155.

⁷² Szasz, Zoltán Alpar. The Electoral Success of Dominant Parties Representing the Hungarian Minority in Romania and Slovakia (2003), p. 144.

regarded as atypical cases and even excluded from analyses.⁷³ The majority of ethno-regionalist parties fall within the left or centre-left of the political spectrum.⁷⁴

Ethnoregionalist parties are relevant to this thesis because, as already suggested, they are arguably rather prominently influenced by Europeanization, and are usually diametrically opposed to nationalist-populist parties in terms of their underlying interests in relation to the nation-state. The rhetoric of “empowerment” is central to the identity of most such parties⁷⁵ and this is likely to attract the wrath of traditional nationalists. Hence they might be expected to have certain sympathy with the EU project.

Europeanization is commonly held to be quite beneficial for ethnoregionalist parties in terms of empowerment opportunities, both in a substantive and normative sense. EU programmes are deemed to have reinforced the regions as a relevant decision-making level, even in states lacking a tradition of granting regions the opportunity to exercise significant competences.⁷⁶ Moreover, Bartolini has advanced the argument that the EU is gradually paving the way for the territorial type of political representation to become more important than the nation-wide interest representation one. For instance, having in mind the rise of the Euroregions, the theorist maintains that a new form of “subnational territorial competition to attract capital and develop resources endogenously” has arisen.⁷⁷ Neofunctionalists subscribe to the same view, as they regard domestic actors like regions or interest groups as gradually becoming more successful in circumventing the national government when it comes to EU policy-making.⁷⁸ Thus, Bartolini alludes to the EU being an accomplice to the globalization processes, as it is causing the reversal of some of the mechanisms, which were associated

⁷³ Dandoy, Regis. *Ethno-regionalist parties in Europe: a typology* (2010), p. 198.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p. 204.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p. 199.

⁷⁶ Painter, Joe. *European Citizenship and the Regions* (2003), pp. 9-10.

⁷⁷ Ansell, Christopher K. *Restructuring Authority and Territoriality* (2004), pp. 10-11. (citing Stefano Bartolini. *Old and New Peripheries in the Processes of European Territorial Integration*, 2004, pp. 27-28).

⁷⁸ Boerzel, Tanja A. *States and Regions in the European Union – Institutional Adaptation in Germany and Spain* (2002), pp. 20-21.

with state-building.⁷⁹ In this regard, the implicit eating away at the foundations of the centralized nation-state attributable to the Europeanization dynamics may be regarded as a favorable development from the standpoint of subnational or ethnoregionalist party adherents.⁸⁰

On the empirical level, Lynch's 1990s research points out that ethnoregionalist parties have obtained better results at European elections than at parliamentary elections in their own country. The reasons for this could be manifold: like other relatively small parties, ethnoregionalist parties benefit from the "second order elections" phenomenon (the tendency for less strategic voting on the part of electorates that tends to punish the governments at the helm of the country).⁸¹ From a purely procedural standpoint, the electoral system in use at the European elections is in many cases more advantageous to these types of parties, as the electorate of an ethnoregionalist party tends to be territorially strongly concentrated and therefore more often controls a relative majority in a number of single-member constituencies.⁸²

In terms of more indirect effects, if one is to assume that the unified nation-state is the natural antipode of the ethnoregionalist party and its constituencies, then the weakening of the nation-state, which is often ascribed to the processes of Europeanization – as also mentioned above, could be deemed a contributing factor to the rise of ethnoregionalist activities within countries. The symbolic aspect is frequently emphasized – both ethnoregionalism and European integration are seen to concern themselves with the

⁷⁹ Ansell, Christopher K. *Restructuring Authority and Territoriality* (2004), p. 10. (citing Stefano Bartolini. *Old and New Peripheries in the Processes of European Territorial Integration*, 2004, pp. 26-27)

⁸⁰ Ladrech, Robert. *Europeanization of Interest Groups and Political Parties* (2005), p. 8.

⁸¹ De Winter, Liewen. *The Impact of European Integration on Ethnoregionalist Parties* (2001), p. 12. (citing Peter Lynch. *Minority Nationalism and European Integration*, 1996).

⁸² *Ibid*, p. 12-15.

reterritorialization of existing state-based forms of economic, political, and social organization, the former maintaining that the regional/sub-state level is the most appropriate for territorial organization, while the latter stressing the need for a transfer of competences onto the European level.⁸³

From a normative perspective, the EU is sometimes depicted as being an intrinsically friendlier environment for sub-national groups, as the EU is multicultural and thus lacking a single dominant identity.⁸⁴ In Shore's terms, pertaining to the European citizenship realm, supranational institutions are seen as better-positioned to safeguard the rights of cultural minorities and "embody a higher morality as national ones".⁸⁵

It is also worth pointing out that some of the discourses common within the EU could be eagerly co-opted by party officials from ethnoregionalist parties to provide legitimacy for their own claims. For instance, ethnoregionalist parties are seen as having the potential to capitalize on the broad political commitment to the principle of subsidiarity (which can be interpreted as encouraging regional-level governance),⁸⁶ as engendered by the EU.

Nonetheless, a number of arguments have also been raised to contest the assumption that ethnoregionalist parties benefit from Europeanization. The EU is sometimes regarded as a threat to regional empowerment. European integration, often seen as a vehicle of economic globalization, could further peripheralize some marginal regions and reinforce stronger ones. In addition, EU competition policy prohibits state subsidies to ailing industrial sectors that are located in certain regions.⁸⁷ European integration could also pose certain political and constitutional challenges to the more historical regions within the state. In Whitehead's

⁸³ Anwen, Elias. *Europeanization and the symbolic politics of ethnoregionalism: towards an expanded framework of analysis* (2003), p. 7.

⁸⁴ Jolly, Seth. *The Europhile Fringe? Regionalist Party Support for European Integration* (2007), p. 112.

⁸⁵ Shore, Cris. *Whither European Citizenship? Eros and Civilization Revisted* (2004), p. 31. (also cited in Dandolov, Philip. *Nationalist-populist parties and the EU: attitudes and their determinants (pragmatic and/or ideological)*, 2010).

⁸⁶ Malloy, Tove H. *National Minority Regions in the Enlarged European Union: Mobilizing for Third Level Politics?* (2005), pp. 5-9.

conception, the wish to homogenize all European structures may cause countries that possess features of asymmetrical federalism (e.g. Spain and Belgium) to change the degree of authority allocated to certain regions. Thus, the fact that a standardized concept of subsidiarity would be forced upon states could engender disappointment for certain regions that are likely to lose their privileged position.⁸⁸

However, the arguments outlined above are not sufficient to cast doubts on the strong counter-evidence regarding the beneficial impacts of the EU. As summed up by De Winter: “the opportunities for the development of ethnoregionalist parties and the empowerment of the ethnoregional populations they represent outweigh the constraints that Europeanization poses”.⁸⁹ An examination of the general sentiments of members of ethnoregionalist parties towards the European Union further corroborates this viewpoint.

There are some divergences between ethnoregionalist parties when it comes to the attitudes displayed towards the EU project.

Still, according to De Winter, in 1984 the ethno-territorial parties had the most unabashedly pro-EU attitudes of any party family. Ray’s data confirms De Winter’s findings and analyzes ethnoregionalist attitudes over a longer time frame – his research reveals that between 1984 and 1996, the ethnoregionalist party family displayed the greatest degree of pro-Europeanness of any party family, averaging 5.82 on a 7-point scale (with “1” corresponding to “strongly opposed to the EU” and “7” corresponding to “strongly in favour of the EU”). The regionalists were also gauged to be the most homogeneous party family in

⁸⁷ De Winter, Liewen and Margarita Gomez-Reino Cachafeiro. *European Integration and Ethnoregionalist Parties* (2002), p. 488.

⁸⁸ De Winter, Liewen. *The Impact of European Integration on Ethnoregionalist Parties* (2001), pp. 5-6. (citing Alan Whitehead. 'Spain, European regions and city state', 1996).

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p. 21.

terms of standard deviations of their EU attitudes.⁹⁰ More recent studies have confirmed that ethnoregionalist parties tend to be consistently pro-EU.⁹¹ Analyses of CEE minority and ethnoregionalist parties have demonstrated that they are also highly supportive of the EU despite being quite diverse ideologically and they are typically more pro-EU than the party average for their countries. However, a minor disconnect persists, with party elites being more sympathetic to European integration than their actual electorates.⁹² Some of the evidence suggests that ethnic minority parties in CEE countries are more likely to alter their behaviour in order to portray themselves as responsive to EU measures (for instance, by creating the impression that they do not solely push for minority-specific demands) than their counterparts in “old” member states.⁹³ Ethnic parties in the East have been gauged to have benefited in both tangible and intangible ways from Europeanization, for instance through their enhanced legitimacy due to participating in European Parliament elections and the actual funding secured.⁹⁴

Furthermore, some natural barriers when it comes to the potential for solidarity between ethnoregionalist parties that are based in “old” (Western European) member states and those operating within “new” (CEE) countries exist. A noticeable anti-enlargement slant has been part of the political philosophy of some West European ethnoregionalist party visionaries, as the territorial expansion of the EU has been associated with a slowing down of the continued deepening of the EU, providing an opportunity to the nation-state to return to the forefront and again occupy the front stage.⁹⁵ The EFA has commonly subscribed to such a brand of Europessimism, maintaining that the EU would return to being an intergovernmental

⁹⁰ De Winter, Liewen. *The Impact of European Integration on Ethnoregionalist Parties* (2001), p. 16. (citing Leonard Ray. *Measuring Party Orientations towards European Integration: results from an expert survey, 1999*, pp. 292-294)

⁹¹ Jolly, Seth. *The Europhile Fringe? Regionalist party support for European integration* (2007), p. 124.

⁹² Spirova, Maria. *The EP elections as an arena for Ethnic Minority Representation: Evidence from new EU member states* (2010), p. 21.

⁹³ Spirova, Maria. *European integration and minority politics: ethnic parties at the EP elections* (2012), p. 77.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁹⁵ De Winter, Liewen. *The Impact of European Integration on Ethnoregionalist Parties* (2001), p. 7.

organization after the 2004 enlargement. It regarded the CEE states as true “nations with a state” (nationally homogeneous) and thus the number of countries characterized as constituting fertile grounds for ethnoregionalist activities would shrink from 1/3 of the EU members (5/15) to 1/5 or even less.⁹⁶

2.3 The EU and minority rights organizations

While the main focus of the thesis will be on party stakeholders, a brief account of Europeanization dynamics in the case of interest groups with a pro-minority agenda is helpful at this point given that non-party actors of that nature are deemed as being likely to display an even higher degree of immersion in the EU environment (and are likely to be more dependent on EU actors, as elucidated by Poguntke in the introductory passage of this subsection). In addition, there is of course a certain commonality in the goals pursued by party and non-party actors, which implicitly (or explicitly) claim to be advocates of non-core interests. Some would expect that ethnoregionalist parties would regard pro-minority organizations as natural allies due to the latters’ similar aims of attaining equality of status with the “core” national group. However, it appears that ethnoregionalist factions are often at loggerheads with organizations representing the interests of other ethnic minorities, as for example seen in the case of Spain.⁹⁷

There are two main schools of thought regarding the potential of Europeanization to enhance opportunity structures for organizations interested in the protection of minority rights.

On the one hand, state-centred theorists tend to be skeptical of the role of the European level in decision-making affecting minority groups, emphasizing instead the continued

⁹⁶ Ibid, pp. 7-8.

importance of the national level when it comes to the making of claims on behalf of such organizations. As Geddes succinctly put it: “the organizational behaviour of different [minority] ethnic groups is still strongly structured by national political frameworks and/or the nature of local opportunities; despite a great deal of talk about new European opportunities, there is a clear underinvestment in the European level, or worse, the EU remains remote and uninteresting, indeed irrelevant, to these ethnic groups’ self-perceived interests”.⁹⁸ In this regard, Eising advances the claim that European multilevel governance possesses a certain “built-in tendency to work to the disadvantage of weaker interests”.⁹⁹ Kohler-Koch and Eising also confirm this, noting the presence of a correlation between weak domestic access and weak access to European structures, essentially implying that any representational deficiencies on the national level also tend to manifest themselves on the European level (“obstinacy thesis”).¹⁰⁰

In addition, theorists like Brubaker tend to prioritize certain aspects pertaining to national culture, domestic institutional lock-ins, and so on. For instance, in the case of the former, he sees deeply embedded national self-definitions of citizenship as being key in terms of shaping responses of nation-states to minority claims and the potential for more egalitarian outcomes (frequently contrasting the more civic understanding of France versus the more ethnic one of Germany in the 1990s and comparing naturalization rates between the

⁹⁷ Messina, Anthony M. Still Two Tiers of Ethnic Conflict? Implications for the Evolution of a European Identity and Polity (2008), pp. 17-18.

⁹⁸ Parker, Melissa Anne. The Europeanization of Islam: the Role of the Multi-Level Structure of the EU (2005), p. 5 (citing Andrew Geddes. *Immigration and European Integration: Towards a Fortress Europe?*, 2000, p. 414).

⁹⁹ Gray, Emily and Paul Statham. Becoming European? The Transformation of the British Pro-migrant NGO Sector in Response to Europeanization (2005), p. 880. (citing Rainer Eising. Multilevel Governance and Business Interests in the European Union, 2004, p. 237).

¹⁰⁰ Greer, Scott L. and Christopher Adolph. Mobilizing Bias in Europe – Lobbies, Democracy, and EU Health Policy-Making (2008), pp. 420-421 (citing Rainer Eising and Beate Kohler-Koch. *Interessenpolitik im Europäischen Mehrebenensystem*/Policies of Interest groups in the European multi-level governance system, 2004, p. 46)

countries).¹⁰¹ In the case of the latter, institutional environments and structural arrangements within specific states that are deeply entrenched are regarded as significant by experts that emphasize the salience of institutional constraints.¹⁰² For example, national constitutions “lock-in” certain divisions of powers and these usually persist for many years and cannot be easily altered at the whim of a particular statesman or faction. They also set the tone for the way in which the EU directives go through the process of implementation.¹⁰³ Also worth mentioning is Andrew Moravcsik’s “gatekeeper notion”, stressing the supremacy of nation-states in international deliberations and general decision-making, and downplaying the importance of entities that operate without the “blessing” of the nation-state.¹⁰⁴

On the other hand, theorists who subscribe to the post-national view tend to emphasize the erosion of the boundaries of the nation-state and lend credence to the notion that a post-national citizenship, based on universal human rights, as well as transnationalism, has emerged, which constitutes a significant outlet for minority claims. In a nutshell, while not completely downplaying the role of the state, the post-nationalists see it as having to a large extent lost its control over policies pertaining to minorities within its borders. In this vein, in Sandholtz’s conception, the benefits of Europeanization for minority organizations and similar entities are twofold. First, there is an increase in the number of potential allies, i.e. supranational institutions like the EU are conceptualized as potential coalition partners of groups representing ethnic and regional minorities, which face frustrations due to a lack of responsiveness from local or national governments. Secondly, the emergence of a multitude of networks, also dubbed as the “Brussels complex”, essentially entails the creation of

¹⁰¹ Koopmans, Ruud and Paul Statham. *Challenging the Liberal Nation-State? Postnationalism, Multiculturalism, and the Collective Claims-Making of Migrants and Ethnic Minorities in Britain and Germany* (1999), pp. 5-6. (citing Rogers Brubaker. *Immigration, Citizenship, and the Nation-State in France and Germany: a Comparative Historical Analysis*, 1990, pp. 393-397).

¹⁰² Allan, James. *The Curious Concept of the Living Tree (or Non-Locked-In) Constitution* (2008), pp. 23-24.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Jordan, Andrew. *The European Union – an Evolving System of Multi-level governance...or government?* (2001), p. 201 (citing Andrew Moravcsik. *Preferences and Power in the European Community: a Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach*, 1993, pp. 485-486).

various political arenas that centre on the negotiation of common issues.¹⁰⁵ All in all, ‘multi-levelness’, which is seen as typifying the EU, is regarded as conducive to the formation of a vast array of interest groups. This is attributable to the understanding that political regulation in multilevel systems is more permissive of pronounced inter-regional differences in interest group organization (relative to unitary states). In addition, some potential for influencing the nation-state is also identified – e.g. there is the possibility of “trickle-down” or “boomerang” effects pertaining to national politics whenever an organization successfully engages at the supranational level.¹⁰⁶

As an addendum, the “golden middle” notion is sometimes emphasized when it comes to the potential for domestic organizations to make use of Europeanization – essentially, national organizations would be ill-advised to be primarily dependent on funding by their national governments, as it could compromise their autonomy, but at the same time, if they do not receive any government monetary transfers at all, their capacity to carry out their tasks could be imperiled.¹⁰⁷

From a purely normative standpoint, certain effects of Europeanization should not be understated. Europeanization (operating through the creation of “European regimes”, centred on minority rights and anti-racism, for instance) is seen as encouraging social learning among domestic actors (from the national down to the local level).¹⁰⁸ In the case of CEE states, an impositional understanding of Europeanization through conditionality, because of the CEE countries’ inability to influence the *acquis communautaire* and the requirement that they adopt and implement them in full prior to accession, has led to considerable improvements in

¹⁰⁵ Parker, Melissa Anne. The Europeanization of Islam: the Role of the Multi-Level Structure of the EU (2005), p. 7. (citing Wayne Sandholtz. Membership Matters: Limits of the Functional Approach to European Institutions, 1996, pp. 419-422).

¹⁰⁶ Beyers, Jan. Gaining and Seeking Access – the European Adaptation of Domestic Interest Associations (2002), pp. 590-595.

¹⁰⁷ Beyers, Jan and Bart Kerremans. Critical Resource Dependencies and the Europeanization of Domestic Interest Groups (2007), p. 461.

¹⁰⁸ Grigoriadis, Ioannis. On the Europeanization of Minority Rights Protection: Comparing the cases of Greece and Turkey (2008), pp. 31-35.

the situation of national minorities within “new” member states (as some chapters of the *acquis* specifically deal with aspects relevant to minority rights protection).¹⁰⁹ However, there are a number of caveats – in Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier’s conception, conditionality is seen to be more effective in the case of states with a realistic prospect of full membership.¹¹⁰ A certain slide-back effect pertaining to compliance has also been observed in the post-accession stage (once the membership reward was granted).¹¹¹

Overall, it appears as if non-party entities are more explicit in acknowledging and giving credit to the EU as a benefactor when it comes to the advancement of their claims.¹¹² Arguably, ethnoregionalist parties are much less ready to recognize the positive impact of the EU and the way it aids their causes.

2.4 The EU and the expansion of minority rights

While between 1946 and 1989 “minority questions” tended to be neglected in European political thought and the great powers generally did not play a decisive role in upholding minority rights by exerting pressure on “rogue” states,¹¹³ minority-related issues in the contemporary world have gained in importance. A. King and B. Schneider utilize the term “awakening of minorities” to capture the increased activism on the part of members of minority groups since the early 1990s, seen to be an outgrowth of global, regional, military-strategic and other factors.¹¹⁴ Some of the previous sections have briefly alluded to the EU’s impacts on the rights of ethnic and cultural minority groups within nation-states, especially in

¹⁰⁹ Goetz, Klaus H. *The New Member States and the EU* (2004), p. 2.

¹¹⁰ Ram, Melanie H. *Democratization through European integration: the case of minority rights in the Czech Republic and Romania* (2003), p. 31. (citing Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier. *Governance by conditionality: EU rule transfer to the candidate countries of Central and Eastern Europe*, 2004, p. 673)

¹¹¹ Swoboda, Hannes and Jan Marinus Wiersma. *Democracy, Populism and Minority Rights* (2008), p. 63.

¹¹² Eising, Rainer. *Institutional Context, Organizational Resources and Strategic Choices* (2007), p. 334.

¹¹³ Hofmann, Rainer. *Der Schutz von Minderheiten in Europa* (The Protection of Minorities in Europe) (2006), p. 382.

the case of CEE countries. However, it is essential to take a more thorough look at the precise instruments that were at the EU's disposal during the accession negotiations, the dynamics between the different candidate states, the interconnections with other EU issue areas, as well as some of the more recent developments within this domain in order to account for the need to examine the nationalist-populist actors' views on the minority situation within certain member states through the prism of EU processes.

The concept of "minority" is quite difficult to unpack and remains a contested one. For instance, national minority groups (e.g. Hungarians in Slovakia) often prioritize gaining a degree of autonomy from central government while immigrant minority groups (e.g. Turks in Germany) are generally interested in the implementation of measures that would provide them with additional opportunities for societal participation.¹¹⁵ In a very broad sense, "national minorities" could be conceptualized as ethno-cultural communities that are within the same state as one (or more) larger and/or more dominant nations and are rather well-established.¹¹⁶ Immigrant minority groups lack a long history of cohabitation with members of the majority (in terms of longevity of coexistence with "core" groups) and often settle within a specific state in accordance with certain immigration policies.¹¹⁷ Sasse and Thielemann note that the concept of "ethnic minorities" sometimes encompasses migrant groups, for instance in the case of the UK.¹¹⁸ Nonetheless, in contemporary Europe recent migrants are often excluded from access to minority rights.

"Minority rights" constitute a rather heterogeneous category, but tend to possess two features in common: they add to the civil and political rights tied to citizenship (at least in the

¹¹⁴ Alexander King and Bertrand Schneider. *Die globale Revolution: ein Bericht des Rates des Club of Rome (The Global Revolution: A Report from the Club of Rome)* (1991), p. 42.

¹¹⁵ Kymlicka, Will and Wayne Norman. *Citizenship in Diverse Societies* (2000), p. 18.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

¹¹⁸ Shaw, Jo. *The Transformation of Citizenship in the European Union – Electoral Rights and the Restructuring of Political Space* (2007), p. 325 (citing Guendolin Sasse and Eiko Thielemann. *A Research Agenda for the Study of Migrants and Minorities in Europe*, 2005, p. 655).

case of liberal democracies) and they serve the purpose of providing the conditions for the accommodation and recognition of distinctive identities and needs of minority groups.¹¹⁹

Socio-economic rights of minorities are sometimes closely tied to the privileges emanating from national citizenship, but could be quite expansive and include rights to subsidized housing or eligibility for civil service occupations.¹²⁰ Cultural and symbolic rights are no less fundamental from the standpoint of minority groups. They could be multifaceted and include aspects like exemptions from laws that are unduly burdensome, because they conflict with cultural practices and special provisions for their better representation within institutions of government.¹²¹

Throughout much of its existence, the EU has preferred to display support for “human” as opposed to “minority” rights, though this philosophy has been rapidly changing since the early 1990s. One of the stated functions of European integration is the modernization of those aspects of societies, where reforms are difficult to implement, in part because of certain entrenched positions on issues like human rights.¹²² Human (and by extension minority rights) are sometimes depicted as “elite interests”. In this regard, the EU is characterized as an organization that is not too exposed to popular fears and concerns and is accordingly seen as possessing more room to maneuver than member states when it comes to improving the plight of minority groups.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Kymlicka, Will and Wayne Norman. *Citizenship in Diverse Societies* (2000), p. 2.

¹²⁰ Benhabib, Seyla and Eugene Meyer. *Another Cosmopolitanism* (2006), p. 143.

¹²¹ Kymlicka, Will and Wayne Norman. *Citizenship in Diverse Societies* (2000), p. 25.

¹²² Von Bogdandy, Armin. *The European Union as a Human Rights Organization? Human Rights and the Core of the European Union* (2000), p. 1315.

¹²³ *Ibid*, p. 11.

As for the actual EU mechanisms for triggering changes with regard to minorities in the member states' legal provisions, they tend to be varied, but also not always sufficiently clear or consistent with each other.

It is contested whether the EU foundational principles, as provided in Article 6 of the TEU, actually include respect for and protection of minorities. Article 6 (1) makes a reference to the principles of "liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law...", but it is arguable whether minority rights could be subsumed under the heading "human rights and fundamental freedoms".¹²⁴ Article 6 (2) of the TEU provides that: "[t]he Union shall respect fundamental rights", as guaranteed by the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR), Article 14 of which refers to the principle of non-discrimination based on an "association with a national minority". However, the emphasis on the national constitutional traditions of member states as a point of reference when it comes to upholding human rights (like those pertaining to minorities) is at times seen as casting a shadow on the preeminence of supranational legal principles.¹²⁵

In a legal sense, it has been suggested that Article 13 of the EC Treaty could be drawn upon by the Council in situations necessitating the adoption of measures protecting persons belonging to national minorities against discrimination.¹²⁶ In addition, Article 151 of the consolidated version of the Treaty Establishing the European Community stresses the importance of protecting regional and national diversity, including the preservation of minority cultures.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Hillion, Christophe. *Enlargement of the European Union – the Discrepancy between Membership Obligations and Accession Conditions as regards the protection of minorities* (2003), p. 718.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 719-720.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 724.

¹²⁷ Toth, Judit. *Connections of Kin Minorities to the Kin-state in the Extended Schengen Zone* (2003), p. 372.

Some theorists regard the EU's treatment of minority issues as generally having progressed in a linear fashion. During the first phase (encompassing the period between the 1960s and 1990s) minority questions were essentially a non-issue on the EU's radar. For example, the EEC (European Economic Community)-Turkey (1963), EEC-Malta (1970) and EEC-Cyprus (1972) Association Agreements, as well as those with Hungary and Poland (1991) did not include any references to minority protection.¹²⁸ During the second phase (in the aftermath of the 1993 Copenhagen summit) minority issues were referred to in a general fashion by the EU. For instance, the European Association Agreements between the EU and Romania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia (1993) included a general insistence to "respect human rights, including those of minorities".¹²⁹ In a joint declaration with the US in 1991, EU member states affirmed that one of the principal obstacles to the attainment of democracy and a high level of economic development in Eastern Europe was "dealing with ethnic diversity and the rights of persons belonging to national minorities".¹³⁰ References to the plight of minority groups became more specific after 1995, following the signing of the Association Agreements between the EU and the Baltic states. The EU began to pressure these countries for the adoption of concrete measures (e.g. the provision of school instruction for Russian pupils in their own language).¹³¹

The increased focus on minority issues by the EU since the early 1990s has been primarily attributed to its concern regarding the impact of minority issues on the international security and stability of the CEE region (and by extension the Western European countries as well).¹³² In particular, the crisis in Yugoslavia may have contributed to the fostering of

¹²⁸ Gawrich, Andrea. *Die EU-Minderheitenpolitik und die Erweiterungsprozesse* (The European Union policies on minorities and enlargement) (2006), p. 498.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Vizi, Balász. The Unintended Legal Backlash of the Enlargement? The Inclusion of the Rights of Minorities in the EU Constitution (2005), p. 5.

¹³¹ Gawrich, Andrea. *Die EU-Minderheitenpolitik und die Erweiterungsprozesse* (The European Union policies on minorities and enlargement) (2006), p. 498.

¹³² Vizi, Balász. The Unintended Legal Backlash of the Enlargement? The Inclusion of the Rights of Minorities in the EU Constitution (2005), p. 4.

linkages between minority protection and the EU's external policies striving for "conflict prevention".¹³³ In 1991, the then EU member states founded the Badinter Commission, with the aim of providing expert advice regarding some of the legal queries arising out of the dissolution of Yugoslavia, an outgrowth of which was the "Declaration on the Guidelines on Recognition of New States in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union". This declaration included a number of provisions pertaining to the fair treatment of minorities, essentially elevating "minority protection" to one of the preconditions for the recognition of statehood.¹³⁴ The Stability Pact project, pioneered by France in 1993 and largely operating within the auspices of the EU, encouraged EU member states to craft bilateral agreements, addressing border and minority issues.¹³⁵ However, while it helped raise the profile of minority issues and led to the signing of a number of bilateral treaties, it did not deliver many measurable results, primarily due to the absence of control and punitive mechanisms, and a lack of specific deadlines, as well as the paucity of financial support.¹³⁶

As stipulated in the previous sections, in the run-up to the 2004 and 2007 enlargements, the EU encouraged member states to conclude bilateral agreements between themselves, notably to guarantee minority rights. The Copenhagen political criteria made a clear distinction between human rights and the respect for and protection of minorities.¹³⁷ The EU also pressed CEE countries to review their internal policies regarding their minorities. With the beginning of official negotiations, the EU Commission started releasing regular reports (initially named Progress Reports and later referred to as Regular Reports) to analyze the extent to which the reforms implemented were in accordance with the Copenhagen criteria.

¹³³ Ibid, p. 5.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid, p. 6.

¹³⁶ Toth, Judit. *Connections of Kin Minorities to the Kin-state in the Extended Schengen Zone* (2003), p. 373.

¹³⁷ Vizi, Balász. *The Unintended Legal Backlash of the Enlargement? The Inclusion of the Rights of Minorities in the EU Constitution* (2005), p. 9.

The first of these reports were distributed in 1998 and specifically mentioned minorities.¹³⁸ The EU accession conditionality has been credited as “undoubtedly having played a positive role” in relation to the status of minority groups in CEE countries.¹³⁹ Mahler and Toivanen point out that there was a new willingness on the part of key political actors in candidate countries to “forcefully speak in favor of minority rights” in order not to negatively affect the membership prospects for their countries.¹⁴⁰ Melanie Ram also distinguishes between the degrees of difficulty when it came to kick-starting reforms in countries lacking the prospect of membership and those with the status of candidate states, with the latter progressing much more rapidly.¹⁴¹ In the case of Romania, Ram identifies a link between the increased protection of minority rights and the gradual turn towards a multicultural society.¹⁴² The 2003 Comprehensive Monitoring Reports on the 10 candidate countries’ preparations for membership touched upon discrimination in employment and social isolation affecting minorities. This is regarded as a paradigm shift, as the implication was that protection of minorities was no longer solely a political criterion, but was also tied to membership obligations like certain standards in employment and social policies.¹⁴³

The requirement of respect for and protection of minorities has been quite prominent in the EU accession conditionality, but the EU’s capacity to monitor it internally (especially in

¹³⁸ Johnson, Carter. *The Use and Abuse of Minority Rights: Assessing Past and Future EU Policies towards Accession Countries of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe* (2006), p. 38.

¹³⁹ Hillion, Christophe. *Enlargement of the European Union – the Discrepancy between Membership Obligations and Accession Conditions as regards the protection of minorities* (2003), p. 728.

¹⁴⁰ Mahler, Claudia and Reetta Toivanen. *Die Erweiterung der Europäischen Union: eine Chance für nationale und ethnische Minderheiten?* (The enlargement of the Union – a new opportunity for national and ethnic minorities?) (1993), p. 67.

¹⁴¹ Johnson, Carter. *The Use and Abuse of Minority Rights: Assessing Past and Future EU Policies towards Accession Countries of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe* (2006), p. 39. (citing Melanie H. Ram. *Democratization through European Integration: The Case of Minority Rights in the Czech Republic and Romania*, 2003, p. 29).

¹⁴² Ibid, p. 39. (citing Melanie H. Ram. *Democratization through European Integration: The Case of Minority Rights in the Czech Republic and Romania*, 2003, pp. 43-44).

¹⁴³ Hillion, Christophe. *The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Union* (2008), pp. 7-8.

the post-accession phase) has frequently been called into question.¹⁴⁴ EU membership results in a relaxation of the pressure to ensure respect for and protection of minorities in general and also leads to more lax assessments of the degree to which the standards of the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities are observed.¹⁴⁵ A related issue stems from the likelihood that a country's minority policies could actually turn out to be on a collision course with certain EU norms. For example, successful policies enhancing the status of minorities may have to be based on the notion of affirmative action, which could conflict with the EU non-discrimination principle or a number of freedoms underpinning the internal market.¹⁴⁶

Another downside is attributable to the lack of consistency with regard to the overarching minority standards applicable to CEE candidate countries.¹⁴⁷ In the pre-accession phase, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities served as an important guiding principle for signatory states in this realm, but in practice it provided them with a lot of leeway in terms of determining what their "national minorities" were.¹⁴⁸ For instance, Slovenia afforded national minority status to Italians, Hungarians and Roma people within its borders, but refrained from extending the same privilege to the more numerous communities of Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats. In Hughes and Sasse's terms: "At best EU conditionality made minority protection a salient issue in the political agenda of the [Central and East European countries], but the fact that the EU had little to offer in terms of clarifying the issue, substantive measures and policy practice, allowed historical domestic precedents to

¹⁴⁴ Hillion, Christophe. *Enlargement of the European Union – the Discrepancy between Membership Obligations and Accession Conditions as regards the protection of minorities* (2003), p. 740.

¹⁴⁵ Hillion, Christophe. *The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Union* (2008), p. 13.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁴⁷ Johnson, Carter. *The Use and Abuse of Minority Rights: Assessing Past and Future EU Policies towards Accession Countries of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe* (2006), p. 29.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

resurface.”¹⁴⁹ The same applied to some “old” member states - up until at least the mid 2000s, Germany recognized Danish and Sinti people as minorities and denied the same status to those from Turkish and Polish descent.¹⁵⁰

Moreover, while minority issues were a significant item on the agenda when it came to the membership negotiations with CEE states, during the same period the EU abstained from providing a similar emphasis for its existing members. For instance, the Amsterdam Treaty illustrates the differences with regard to the minority-related burdens imposed on “new” and “old” member countries. It transposed each of the conditions contained in the Copenhagen Criteria into EU primary law - with the sole exception of the minority protection condition.¹⁵¹ European NGOs concerning themselves with minority issues have lambasted what they deem as the hypocrisy of the EU in this particular domain. Concern for minorities is primarily gauged to be “an export article rather than one for domestic consumption”.¹⁵²

Furthermore, the issue of supposed double standards in relation to the EU’s treatment of minority issues has not been absent from the debates focused on comparing the different candidate countries. Schweltnus describes minority protection conditionality as exhibiting significant divergences across accession countries. He distinguishes between two main camps. The first one included Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. The EU requirements pertaining to these countries have been viewed as all encompassing, with the Commission advocating the wide inclusion of minorities in all spheres of life as well as cultural autonomy on certain occasions.¹⁵³ The second camp consisted of Latvia and Estonia. In addition to what has been regarded as “toleration of established discrimination” in these

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 37 (citing James Hughes and Gwendolyn Sasse. *Monitoring the Monitors: EU Enlargement Conditionality and Minority Protection in the CEECs*, 2003, p. 25)

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 32.

¹⁵¹ Johnson, Carter. *The Use and Abuse of Minority Rights: Assessing Past and Future EU Policies towards Accession Countries of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe* (2006), p. 35.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Kochenov, Dimitry. *Commission’s Approach to Minority Protection during the Preparation of the EU’s Eastern Enlargement: Is 2 better than the promised 1?* (2007), pp. 12-13. (citing G. Schweltnus. ‘Double Standards? Minority Protection as a Condition for Membership’, 2006, pp. 188-190).

two states, the Commission has been gauged to have been much more attentive to reports produced by international organizations (like OSCE) when assessing the minority situation within these countries.¹⁵⁴ Specifically, when referring to the Magyar minority living in Slovakia and Romania, the Commission utilized the term “Hungarian minority”, while when focusing on the minority groups in Estonia and Latvia the preferred term was “Russian-speaking minority”.¹⁵⁵ The latter designation has been interpreted as being narrower in its meaning, essentially only recognizing Russians in these states as “linguistic” (rather than ethnic) minorities.¹⁵⁶ In short, when it came to these constellations of countries the EU adopted different structural approaches, emphasized divergent standards in relation to the linkages between citizenship and minority status and did not describe minority self-government in a uniform way.¹⁵⁷

During the course of accession negotiations, geopolitical aspects also appear to have at times been dominant over normative ones. By early 2000, despite the existence of discriminatory legislation within Estonia and Latvia, a significant improvement of relations between Russia and these states had occurred, which allowed the EU to proceed with the membership negotiations. “Once [international] stability had been achieved, the importance of minority protection became secondary.”¹⁵⁸ In addition, the attention directed by the EU at the plight of certain minorities has been regarded as disproportionate relative to the lack of emphasis on similarly disadvantaged groups. For instance, concerns over future Roma migration from CEE states to Western European countries have been deemed as significant triggers for the EU officials’ preoccupation with Roma issues in the Regular Reports.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴ Kochenov, Dimitry. Commission’s Approach to Minority Protection during the Preparation of the EU’s Eastern Enlargement: Is 2 better than the promised 1? (2007), p. 14. (citing G. Schwellnus. ‘Double Standards? Minority Protection as a Condition for Membership’, 2006, p. 190).

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 19.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 27.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 16.

¹⁵⁸ Johnson, Carter. The Use and Abuse of Minority Rights: Assessing Past and Future EU Policies towards Accession Countries of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe (2006), pp. 46-47.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 48.

From a normative standpoint, the scant attention paid to minority issues when it came to the drafting of the unratified Constitutional Treaty (with political figures like Peter Baltzs, a Hungarian member of the European Convention, being among the few who insisted on the inclusion of references to minorities in Articles 1 and 2 of the Draft Treaty) has been interpreted by some scholars as evidence of the EU's reluctance to recognize "minority protection" as a core value of the Union.¹⁶⁰

Nonetheless, the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty on 1 December 2009 has continued the trend towards the recognition of minority protection as one of the overarching principles of the EU and has contributed to the mainstreaming of minority rights in EU law.¹⁶¹ Article 2 of Title I (Common Provisions) defines respect of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities as one of the values of the EU.¹⁶² The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights has become a legally binding document (Article 6.1). Thus, its provisions dealing with discrimination on the basis of one's membership in a minority group are now obligatory for all member states and could actually be enforced.¹⁶³ The Lisbon Treaty has arguably bridged the gap between EU internal minority policy and pre-accession conditionality, reducing the likelihood of a setback in reforms in this field once membership is attained by a candidate state.¹⁶⁴

This brief overview sets the stage for determining how the dynamics arising out of EU policies in the realm of minorities (some of them significantly improving their plight and/or imposing different burdens on member states) play out into the rhetoric of nationalist-populist

¹⁶⁰ Hillion, Christophe. *Enlargement of the European Union – the Discrepancy between Membership Obligations and Accession Conditions as regards the protection of minorities* (2003), p. 734.

¹⁶¹ Hillion, Christophe. *The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Union* (2008), p. 16.

¹⁶² Council of the European Union. *Consolidated Versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union* (2008), p. 23.

¹⁶³ Hillion, Christophe. *The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Union* (2008), p. 16.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p. 17.

actors in East and West. The impacts of the EU on the situation of minorities within “new” member states may at times be ambiguous, but the EU is certainly acknowledged as an entity that takes such matters seriously and decisively shapes some of the norms in this realm. At the same time the inconsistencies associated with EU policies in this field (due to geopolitical factors and the different views of member states – some like Belgium and the Netherlands were interested in controlled accession of the CEE countries and focused on practical matters when it came to conditionality, while others like Finland and Austria subscribed to “legal and historical justice” interpretations as a guiding principles in their dealings with “new” member countries)¹⁶⁵ are bound to cause indignation among political actors with nationalist clout who feel that their countries have been subjected to the imposition of a vast array of new rules. The minority rights framework, which is part of the Copenhagen Criteria, is of course a key feature of the EU enlargement. In the aftermath of the CEE countries’ accession to the Union in 2004, theorists like Hillion have started to draw attention to the emergence of a new form of “nationalization” of EU enlargement policy. Member states are seen to have become less scrupulous in making use of EU enlargement for their own domestic political processes.¹⁶⁶ The extent to which this prevailing climate could discredit EU policies related to enlargement and cause nationalist parties in CEE and Western European states to rediscover past grievances pertaining to the enlargement dynamics (and particularly to the minority measures “imposed” by the EU) needs to be further scrutinized. What is undoubtedly the case is that the EU has become another key international actor when it comes to advancing both socio-economic and cultural/symbolic minority rights, in a substantive and normative sense.

Accordingly, such transformations engendered by the EU are likely to create concerns among nationalist-populist party members. People belonging to a majority group are quite

¹⁶⁵ Veebel, Viljar. Relevance of Copenhagen Criteria in Actual Accession: Principles, Methods and

likely to be opposed to the granting of minority rights because they regard them as negatively affecting their own privileges and the power that they hold. A 2002 study of 13 countries in Central and Eastern Europe (conducted by Evans and Need) confirms the perhaps intuitive supposition that members of minority groups are much more likely to be supportive of the extension of minority rights than those belonging to the majority.¹⁶⁷ Vermeulen and Slijper (2003) maintain that there are three principal arguments that are raised in the context of minority rights debates and discussions of multiculturalism. These arguments center around the benefits associated with cultural diversity, the need for the existence of social equality and equal opportunities as well as the maintenance of state cohesion and unity.¹⁶⁸ As nationalist-populist actors who belong to majority groups are likely to see cultural diversity in negative terms, they are also inclined to regard the extension of minority rights as undesirable.¹⁶⁹ From the standpoint of nationalist actors, cultural diversity and the existence of group rights are bound to create new identity-related issues, increase the chances that conflicts could arise, reduce social cohesion, and weaken the unity within a society.¹⁷⁰

Minority rights are also sometimes considered difficult to reconcile with democracy. For instance, theorists like Kymlicka who are generally sympathetic to the plight of minorities refuse to endorse special rights for groups that voluntarily immigrate to a country.¹⁷¹ Thus, the perception of the EU as another unwelcome layer that compromises the principles of democracy due to not allowing the nation-state to be fully in charge of immigration policy may be particularly strong when it comes to minority rights as well.

Shortcomings of EU Pre-Accession Evaluation (2011), p. 9.

¹⁶⁶ Hillion, Christophe. The Creeping Nationalization of EU Enlargement Policy (2010), p. 39.

¹⁶⁷ Verkuyten, Maykel and Ali Aslan Yildiz. The Endorsement of Minority Rights: The Role of Group Position, National Context, and Ideological Beliefs (2006), p. 531 (citing G. Evans and A. Need. Explaining ethnic polarization over attitudes towards minority rights in Eastern Europe: A multilevel analysis, 2002, pp. 666-667).

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 532 (citing Hans Vermeulen and Boris Slijper. *Multiculturalisme in Canada, Australie en de Verenigde Staten* /Multiculturalism in Canada, Australia, and the United States, 2003).

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 533.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

As argued in the previous sections of the thesis, the political conditionality and the CEE countries' lack of sustained traditions of enhancing minority rights due to the legacies of totalitarian regimes are some of the reasons to adopt the hypothesis that "EU minority empowerment" would be deemed more significant by nationalist-populist actors in countries that were newcomers to the EU family.

Marc Weller (2008) made an observation along those lines soon after Romania and Bulgaria joined the European Union. His contention is that within the recent EU members from CEE, the crunch issue is the existence of "a fear that minority representative groups might deploy the rights granted to them in order to mount a destabilizing political campaign against the central state. This might lead to demands for territorial autonomy, or perhaps even secession....".¹⁷² In addition, Weller points out that political matters surrounding minorities are especially volatile due to the absence of predictability, as there is "still no coherent minorities policy within the EU and minority issues remain intensely controversial".¹⁷³

When it comes to particular minority populations within CEE countries like the Roma people, the consensus is that they have generally drawn benefits due to the greater focus on minorities.¹⁷⁴ In Peter Vermeersch and Melanie H. Ram's estimation, "the majority of activists lobbying for Roma rights would wholeheartedly agree that the Roma would not have emerged on the agenda of the Central and East European countries had their situation not been brought up as an important issue by the EU."¹⁷⁵ Maria Spirova and Darlene Budd (2008) identify the Roma-specific policies originating from European Commission proposals as

¹⁷¹ Ibid (citing Will Kymlicka. *Multicultural Citizenship: a Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, 1995).

¹⁷² Galbreath, David and Joanne McEvoy. *The European Union Minority Rights Regime: Towards a Theory of Regime Effectiveness* (2012), p. 62. (citing Marc Weller. *Escaping the Self-determination Trap*, 2008, p. 81).

¹⁷³ Ibid, p. 63. (citing Marc Weller. *Escaping the Self-determination Trap*, 2008, pp. 52-53).

¹⁷⁴ Vermeersch, Peter and Melanie H. Ram. *The Roma* (2009), p. 66.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 67.

significant contributory factors towards the reduction of the disparities between Roma groups and members of the majority populations in countries like Hungary, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Romania.¹⁷⁶

There have also been a number of cases in which the imposed isolation of nationalist-populist parties attributable to EU-level functionaries has in indirect ways bolstered the situation of minorities and their helper organizations. One less well-known fall-out from the Haider controversy in Austria (in relation to EU pressure on the governing coalition of the country) concerned the entrance into politics of the Islamic Faith Community in Austria in 2000. This organization, which is today an influential player when it comes to the promotion of Muslim minority rights, managed to use the “strategic window” (during which a delegation of EU experts or three-man Commission were sent to Austria) to stake a claim for establishing itself as an important entity within Austrian society.¹⁷⁷

Thus, issues pertaining to minority rights tend to be combustible and interact with nationalist-populist concerns regarding perceived democratic deficit problems emanating from the EU level.

¹⁷⁶ Spirova, Maria and Darlene Budd. *The EU Accession Process and the Roma Minorities in New and Soon-to-be Member States* (2008), pp. 97-98.

¹⁷⁷ Permoser, Julia, Sieglinde Rosenberger and Kristina Stöckl. *Religious Organizations as Political Actors in the context of Migration: Islam and Orthodoxy in Austria* (2010) , p. 5.

3: General Dimensions and Causes of Euroscepticism

The previous subsection was mainly focused on the nature of EU-engendered transformations and the corresponding strategies adopted by parties and interest groups, while relegating the examination of actual changes in attitudes, introduced by the EU dynamics, to the backstage. Accordingly, this subsection will attempt to fill this gap by scrutinizing the determinants of Eurosceptic attitudes, and providing some insights into the degrees to which they could be attributable to Europeanization dynamics.

As outlined previously, Euroscepticism continues to be as relevant as ever. Hartleb, in a 2012 article, cautions that the European project has recently “reached a critical point” and draws attention to the spread of a “new Euroscepticism”, which is not solely attributable to the effects of the 2008 financial crisis.¹⁷⁸ Some of the ominous signs that Euroscepticism is to remain a salient feature of the European political landscape were already in the picture in 2006 when slightly less than half of EU citizens (according to a Europabarometer surveys) expressed approval for their country’s membership in the Union.¹⁷⁹ Right-wing Eurosceptic factions were in the spotlight during the 2009 EP elections, with the PVV amassing 17 % of the vote in its debut appearance in European elections and three Eurosceptic parties in Austria (the Freedom Party, the Alliance for the Future of Austria and “Dr. Martin’s list”) together surpassing the share of the votes gained by the two governing parties.¹⁸⁰ The same phenomena have not been absent in the Nordic countries as well, with the True Finns receiving 20 % of the voters’ share in the April 2011 Finnish Parliamentary elections. Finland is one example of a country in which the nature of debates on the European Union has rapidly

¹⁷⁸ Hartleb, Florian. European Project in Danger? Understanding Precisely the Phenomena “Euroscepticism, Populism and Extremism” in Times of Crisis (2012), p. 45.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, pp. 45-46.

moved from the “non-controversial” to the “highly contested” box.¹⁸¹ Since 2010, right-wing populist parties have seen representation in all the national parliaments of the Nordic countries and “isolation strategies” directed at such parties have not always been deemed politically viable by the more mainstream ones.¹⁸²

3.1 Euroscepticism – evolution and dimensions of the term

The term Euroscepticism is relatively recent to the field of European studies. It was coined in the 1980s by the British media, attempting to capture the essence of the adversarial relationship between the Margaret Thatcher government and the European Commission, which plagued this period.¹⁸³ However, as early as the 1960s, British Labour leaders like Hugh Gaitskell and James Callaghan adopted positions that from the contemporary standpoint could be deemed to warrant the Eurosceptic label, although the meaning attached to this notion was arguably different at the time (with a lesser emphasis on the EU as an institutional structure) and thus the use of the concept to refer to the attitudes espoused in the early years of the EU project has sometimes been characterized as anachronistic.¹⁸⁴

In terms of the main reasons for the neglect of the Euroscepticism phenomenon in early scholarship pertaining to the EU, one could point out to some of the gaps inherent in a number of the traditional European integration theories that were influential during the pioneering phase of European integration and shaped the “permissive consensus” climate. For instance, adherents of neo-functionalism tended to downplay the importance of public attitudes towards the EU, while those within the federalist camp were inclined to view mass

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 51.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, pp. 51-52.

¹⁸² Jupskås, Anders Ravik. *The electoral rise of populism in the Nordic countries* (2013).

¹⁸³ Spiering, Menno. *British Euroscepticism* (2005), p. 129.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

public support for the EU (and respectively the political parties' benevolence towards the EU project) as a given.¹⁸⁵

As for the underlying nature of Euroscepticism, the term does not easily render itself to any clear-cut definitions. A distinction is often drawn between “hard” Euroscepticism (unyielding, almost non-negotiable opposition to the essence of the EU project itself) vs. “soft” Euroscepticism (opposition and distrust of specific EU measures, the current direction in which the EU is heading, etc.) Szczerbiak and Taggart are seen as the pioneers when it came to this categorization. However, there is arguably not so much a dichotomy, as a continuum. Parties that could be considered to be exhibiting “hard” Euroscepticism are sometimes expediently reclassified and given “soft” Eurosceptic labels depending on the national context, the degree to which the EU feels like sending a warning to a country, and so on.¹⁸⁶ Alternatively, Kopecký and Mudde develop a four-fold typology. The Euroenthusiasts, who support both the ideas of European integration and the general practice of integration, and the “Eurorejects”, who do not accept either, represent the two extremes. Occupying the middle ground are the “Eurosceptics”, who support the idea of a united Europe, but disagree with the general practice of integration, and “Europragmatists”, who tend to be against the idea of the EU, but may support some practices of European integration.¹⁸⁷ This typology is based on the distinction made between diffuse and specific support for European integration, with the former regarded as concerning itself with the ideas behind European integration, while the latter perceived as focusing on the actual practices connected to European integration.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁵ Sørensen, Catharina. Danish and British Popular Euroscepticism Compared: A Skeptical Assessment of the Concept (2004), p. 3.

¹⁸⁶ Ray, Leonard. Mainstream Euroscepticism – Trend or Oxymoron? (2007), pp. 2-3.

¹⁸⁷ Szczerbiak, Aleks and Paul Taggart. Theorizing Party-Based Euroscepticism: Problems of Definition, Measurement, and Causality (2003), pp. 4-5 (citing Petr Kopecký and Cas Mudde. The Two Sides of Euroscepticism: Party Positions on European Integration in East Central Europe, 2002, pp. 302-303).

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, pp. 4-5 (citing Petr Kopecký and Cas Mudde. The Two Sides of Euroscepticism: Party Positions on European Integration in East Central Europe, 2002, pp. 300-301).

It is also worth pointing out that there has been a certain negative connotation attached to the term “Euroscepticism”, perhaps to an even greater extent in the CEE context relative to the Northern and Western European (NWE) one. The pro-European stance of political parties in the “new” EU member and candidate states is thought to have assumed the status of a normative theme – a general rule that inevitably affects the behaviour of political actors. Crossing certain boundaries by virulently criticizing the EU was regarded as having the potential of imperilling their prospects of being perceived as “normal” political actors (at least in the pre-accession phase).¹⁸⁹ In CEE states, attaining EU membership was regarded as vital for the promotion of national development and semblances of “national assertiveness” only started to be displayed by mainstream parties during the final stages of the EU accession negotiations.¹⁹⁰ There was perceived to be a natural fit between the economic policies advocated by the CEE reformers and the requirements surrounding the granting of EU accession.¹⁹¹ In addition, even ambiguous pronouncements regarding the desirability of EU membership tended to carry a negative connotation in the early years after communist rule, as they were seen as indicating allegiance to the communist political system and the Soviet-type structures.¹⁹² As a counterstrategy, certain factions like the Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland (ROP) strove to evade the “Eurosceptic” label, instead proclaiming themselves to be occupying a “pragmatically Eurorealist” or simply “Eurorealist” niche. In essence, the “yes, but..” or “conditional Euroscepticism” is frequently perceived to be the strategy that could be safely embarked upon by party actors in order not to face undue isolation from the

¹⁸⁹ Neumayer, Laure. *Euroscepticism as a political label: the use of European Union issues in political competition in the new Member States* (2007), p. 153.

¹⁹⁰ Szczerbiak, Aleks and Paul Taggart. *Introduction: Researching Euroscepticism in European Party Systems: A Comparative and Theoretical Research Agenda* (2008), pp. 17-18.

¹⁹¹ Henderson, Karen. *Exceptionalism or Convergence? Euroscepticism and Party Systems in Central and Eastern Europe* (2008), pp. 120-123.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, p. 105.

political game.¹⁹³ It was only after 1998, however, that the strong symbolic dimension to EU membership started to wear off and Eurorealism began to creep in.¹⁹⁴

All in all, Euroscepticism remains a slippery concept, as there are many gradations to the feelings of distrust of and opposition towards the EU project and in addition national contexts are bound to influence the degree to which a particular faction is conceptualized as having the markings of a Eurosceptic.

Gary Goertz also provides a helpful definition of Euroscepticism in terms of setting certain temporal boundaries for the concept. Although Euroscepticism is sometimes used broadly and equated with all expressions of opposition to or distrust towards the EU project, Goertz emphasizes the need for a degree of durability in the attitudes/sentiments towards the EU as a whole (or towards key policy areas and developments, associated with the EU project). Essentially, Euroscepticism is not to be regarded as a fleeting phenomenon and spontaneous anti-EU declarations. Very issue-specific complaints (that do not touch upon core domains of the EU) are not to be automatically tarred with the Eurosceptic brush.¹⁹⁵

At the secondary level, Goertz identifies a certain multidimensionality as typifying Euroscepticism, distinguishing between four broad constitutive domains. Ideological Euroscepticism is tied to evaluations of European cooperation that are based on underlying values, for example the distinction between the post-materialists and materialists, developed by Inglehart, with the former being identified as possessing a greater capacity to identify with a more abstract project, transcending the nation-state, like the EU.¹⁹⁶ Similarly, differences in party ideologies, based on their position within the left-right political spectrum, could be

¹⁹³ Vermeersch, Peter. *Contesting Europe: Strategies and Legacies in Polish Political Competition* (2010), p. 516.

¹⁹⁴ Henderson, Karen. *Exceptionalism or Convergence? Euroscepticism and Party Systems in Central and Eastern Europe* (2008), pp. 120-123.

¹⁹⁵ Sørensen, Catharina. Love me, love me not...a typology of public Euroscepticism (2008), p. 6. (citing Gary Goertz. *Social Science Concepts: A User's Guide*, 2005, pp. 50-52).

¹⁹⁶ Skinner, Marianne Sundlisæter. *Different Varieties of Euroscepticism? Conceptualizing and Explaining Euroscepticism in Western European Non-Member States* (2013), pp. 131-132 (citing Ronald Inglehart. *Globalization and Postmodern Values*, 2000, pp. 222-223).

important to take into account. Secondly, the utilitarian strand of Euroscepticism involves making judgments on the EU on the basis of the degree to which economic goals have been perceived to be attained. The often vociferous debates pertaining to the perceived democratic deficit of the EU could also be subsumed under the scope of this understanding of Euroscepticism.¹⁹⁷ For example, Peter Mair (2007) concerns himself primarily with democratic legitimacy issues relevant in the context of the EU, as evinced by the insufficient powers afforded to the members of the EP.¹⁹⁸ The third strand is represented by sovereignty-based Euroscepticism and it reflects trepidations that nation-state sovereignty is being destroyed and national identities are being weakened. Essentially, the nation-state itself is viewed as a *sui generis* entity that is worth preserving and it is believed that the affective support projected for it could not be replicated at the EU level. The last subset is dubbed “principled Euroscepticism” and could be seen as corresponding to the “hard Euroscepticism” box, as described by Szczerbiak and Taggart, essentially entailing the rejection of the very idea of the EU and likely of similar supranational projects.¹⁹⁹

Alternatively, there is the option of studying Euroscepticism by drawing on different levels of analysis – the citizen (micro), the discourse (macro), and the party level (intermediate).

On the one hand, there have been attempts to gauge citizens’ attitudes towards the EU project (with these not necessarily overlapping with any party or faction affiliation), for instance with the aid of Eurobarometer surveys. Haesly (2001), for example, has supported the notion of the UK falling within the box of the “most Eurosceptic countries” and also drawn attention to the divergence in the degree of Euroscepticism exhibited by the English

¹⁹⁷ De Wilde, Pieter. Under what Conditions does Euroscepticism flourish? An evaluation of different approaches and empirical findings (2010), pp. 7-8.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 8 (citing Peter Mair. Political Opposition and the European Union, 2007, pp. 14-16).

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, pp. 6-7.

(approaching the higher values) and the Scots and Welsh (closer to the lower values).²⁰⁰ All in all, factors like age, education, and other demographic characteristics, are generally taken into consideration when it comes to discussions of Euroscepticism at the level of citizens.²⁰¹ On both sides of the continent, members of lower social strata are more likely to express Eurosceptic sentiments, while the opposite tends to apply to people who are better educated and have high calibre jobs, reaping dividends from the free movement of people and goods.²⁰² Furthermore, non-urban cohorts like farmers who are quite reliant on EU subsidies tend to be more Eurosceptic than their urban counterparts.²⁰³ Younger people are also likely to be more well-disposed towards the EU than older ones.²⁰⁴

Measuring the relative saliency of identity vs. economic factors is also deemed as important when it comes to citizens. For instance, Hooghe's and Marks' research stresses the preponderance of identity concerns over economic ones in terms of the extent to which they could account for Eurosceptic feelings. In this regard, exclusive feelings of national identity or nationalist orientations that reject any semblances of double loyalties are seen as being positively correlated with a higher degree of Euroscepticism.²⁰⁵ However, Grabbe and Hughes have pointed out that overemphasis on economic aspects as the reason to join the EU has also been regarded as constituting a stumbling block to support for further integration. Countries like the UK, Sweden and Denmark that are assumed to have joined the EU chiefly for reasons connected to the reaping of economic dividends have been judged to have experienced higher long-term Euroscepticism than those states in which political reasons

²⁰⁰ De Wilde, Pieter. Under what Conditions does Euroscepticism flourish? An evaluation of different approaches and empirical findings (2010), p. 5 (citing Richard Haesly. Euroskeptics, Europhiles and Instrumental Europeans: European Attachment in Scotland and Wales, 2001, pp. 96-97).

²⁰¹ Ibid, pp. 8-9.

²⁰² Lubbers, Marcel and Peer Scheepers. Divergent trends of Euroscepticism in countries and regions of the European Union (2010), p. 789.

²⁰³ Ibid, p. 800.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Hooghe, Liesbet and Gary Marks. The neo-functionalists were (almost) right: politicization and European integration (2005), p. 213.

played the predominant role.²⁰⁶ By contrast, states that are regarded as having primarily benefited due to the EU's efforts directed at the promotion of democracy, in addition to the encouragement of economic growth (like Spain, Portugal and Ireland) have been discovered to be much more effective when it comes to relegating fears pertaining to national identity losses to the backstage – essentially, citizens are no less conscious of the potential national identity threats engendered by the EU project, but are nonetheless more likely to overwhelmingly support their country's membership in the club in comparison to states like the UK. This is due to the perception of EU-created utilities in the political as well as the economic realm.

The symbolic threat posed by minorities and immigrants is likely to influence support for EU integration in a negative fashion. Some studies suggest that symbolic threat (ethno-cultural indicator) tends to be a much more robust predictor of hostility to integration than perceived threat to group resources (economic or utilitarian indicator).²⁰⁷ This issue is discussed in more detail below.

In addition, citizens' attitudes towards the EU have evolved over the last decades, testifying to the dynamic nature of this research field. As already suggested, Euroscepticism has increased in recent years, but research in the 1990s indicated that Euroscepticism was on the decline. For instance, Citrin and Sides' studies revealed that a 10 percentage point increase in the dual attachment of citizens (likelihood to identify with both their respective nation and the EU) characterized the period between 1991 and 1999, which naturally also resulted in a corresponding decrease in the saliency of exclusive national identity conceptions.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ Henderson, Karen. *Exceptionalism or Convergence? Euroscepticism and Party Systems in Central and Eastern Europe* (2002), p. 111 (citing Heather Grabbe and Kirsty Hughes. *Central and East European views on EU Enlargement: Political Debates and Public Opinion*, 1999, p. 190).

²⁰⁷ McLaren, Lauren M. *Identity, Interests and Attitudes to European Integration* (2006), pp. 146-147.

²⁰⁸ Citrin, Jack and John Cides. *Can Europe exist without Europeans? Problems of Identity in a Multinational Community* (2004), pp. 52-53.

Looking at discourses is another approach towards measuring Euroscepticism, and attitudes towards the EU project more widely. The discourse perspective on Euroscepticism focuses on the way certain narratives pertaining to the EU are crafted within national contexts and thus feed into the parties' and general public's discourses on the EU, potentially intensifying or reducing Eurosceptic sentiments. There is a tendency to see certain narratives as deliberately constructed, frequently with the EU in mind, as in the case of the mass media. However, such conceptions of history could also be a result of implicit undercurrents and natural developments and not involve any stakeholders belonging to academic or media communities.

Díez Medrano's (2003) landmark study, focusing on Western Europe, is an exercise in contrasts between Germany, Spain, and the UK when it comes to the ways in which debates about the EU are conducted. For example, the author confirms that the redemption theme - given the WWII historical antecedents - is still rather relevant in Germany and that it structures debates on the EU, often laying the groundwork for a relatively sympathetic portrayal of the EU. By contrast, in the UK there is frequently a marked emphasis on the perceived bellicose nature of the EU, as revealed by the language invoked by the UK at different EU summits (e.g. the propensity to utilize words like "invasion" when debating EU legislation).²⁰⁹ In any case, nationalist stakeholders will try to paint themselves as embodying certain notable struggles of their national community and as following in the footsteps of influential historical predecessors.

Another agent influential in the creation of certain national discourses potentially detrimental to EU-permissive attitudes is the community of historians, with the UK being a vivid example in this regard. For instance, historians like Arthur Bryant, who also actively

lobbied against a “yes” vote in the 1975 EU referendum, and George Trevelyan have been accused of overemphasizing British exceptionalism, essentially driving a wedge between the EU and the UK by stressing British uniqueness and its need to seek its own destiny outside of the confines of the EU.²¹⁰

The discourse perspective on Euroscepticism could be helpful in terms of being able to predict future national trajectories when it comes to the notion of Euroscepticism. For instance, it is often assumed that in countries like Denmark, where military neutrality is conceptualized as one of the hallmarks of the country’s national identity, any EU steps in the direction of enhanced military cooperation could provide fertile grounds for an increase in Eurosceptic sentiments.²¹¹ The discourse perspective pertaining to Euroscepticism also offers some insights into the CEE context, although of a different nature. In the CEECs, pro-EU attitudes are often seen as attributable to the underlying assumption that the process of acquiring EU membership represents a return to the position the state would have been in if it had not been under communist yoke. Thus, the EU’s conditions are not viewed as the external imposition of alien norms, but as a desirable return to a natural state. On the flip side of the coin, opposition to EU membership is most expressed by those who believe that their country would have undergone a markedly different process of development from Western Europe if it had been able to chart its own political course since the early 1950s.²¹²

Furthermore, De Vreese and Semetko’s studies (2002) have revealed that exposure to news media reporting strategically about the Danish 2000 referendum on the EMU contributed to an increase in citizens’ levels of cynicism, which triggered more potent forms of Euroscepticism. In short, the media landscape and the conventions of reporting on EU

²⁰⁹ De Wilde, Pieter. Under what Conditions does Euroscepticism flourish? An evaluation of different approaches and empirical findings (2010), pp. 6-7 (citing Juan Díez Medrano. Framing Europe: attitudes to European integration in Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom, 2003, pp. 49-60).

²¹⁰ Daddow, Oliver J. Euroscepticism and the Culture of the Discipline of History (2006), p. 315.

²¹¹ Ibid, p. 10.

affairs, shaped by the underlying national motifs, could go to some lengths in explaining the emergence and/or strengthening of Eurosceptic views.²¹³

In addition, Anderson (1998) stipulates that the phenomenon of proxy-based Euroscepticism (projecting feelings towards domestic institutions like national parliaments and governments towards the EU) is very real, especially when there is a paucity of specific knowledge pertaining to the general functioning of EU institutions.²¹⁴ The research regarding the cueing effect of national institutions when it comes to expressed attitudes towards supranational ones remains somewhat contradictory, though some additional evidence exists that a low level of trust in national political institutions is associated with increased support for the European Union. For instance, Sánchez-Cuenca (2000) and Sanders et al. (2013) refer to the “substitution effect”: EU institutions are assumed likely to successfully perform a replacement function due to the weakness or ineffectiveness of national institutions.²¹⁵ Kitzing (2003) also confirms that some semblance of such a “substitution effect” exists, but cautions against overemphasizing the connections between trust in the national institutions and support for the EU as a whole. Instrumental considerations may also cause citizens to be hesitant to display support for the EU project, as this could be misinterpreted as approval of the inadequately performing national government and only serve to legitimize it.²¹⁶

One particular element of “bad governance” – corruption – has been characterized as a “highly salient” issue in “new” EU member states and the argument has been advanced that in the minds of many [CEE] citizens this leads to a lesser likelihood to regard the erosion of

²¹² Henderson, Karen. *Exceptionalism or Convergence? Euroscepticism and Party Systems in Central and Eastern Europe* (2002), p. 12.

²¹³ De Vreese, Claes H. *A Spiral of Euroscepticism: the Media's Fault?* (2007), pp. 275-283.

²¹⁴ Arki, Marietta. *The Source of Anti-EU Vote: A Mass-based Preference or a Product of Party Politics?* (2004), p. 4. (citing Christopher J. Anderson. *When in Doubt, Use Proxies: attitudes towards domestic politics and Support for European Integration*, 1998, pp. 570-575).

²¹⁵ Serrichio, Fabio, Myrto Tsakatika and Lucia Quaglia. *Euroscepticism and the Global Financial Crisis* (2013), p. 54 (citing Sánchez-Cuenca. *Ignacio. The Political Basis of Support for European Integration*, 2000 and David Sanders & Gábor Tóka. *Is anyone listening? Mass and elite opinion cueing in the EU*, 2013).

²¹⁶ Henjak, Andrija, Gábor Tóka, and David Sanders. *Support for European Integration* (2012), p. 182.

national sovereignty as a significant risk (and thus causes them to be more receptive towards EU institutions).²¹⁷ What is relevant to the previously outlined notion of “national discourses” is to consider that in certain countries cynicism towards the effectiveness of domestic institutions like parliaments and governments is deeply ingrained and has long-term historical antecedents. In Bulgaria, to take one example, proxy-based Euroscepticism (attaching blame for the ineffective performance of the national government to the EU structures) is arguably not as prominent a phenomenon as in other CEE states, as there is a lesser likelihood of seeing “national” and “supranational” institutions as similar with regard to the way they are constructed. The cynicism and distrust is almost exclusively directed at national institutions, with issues like a high prevalence of corruption being regarded as almost endemic to the country in question and the EU level is actually conceptualized as playing the role of the “good cop” in terms of patiently trying to “cleanse up” the state apparatuses in question.²¹⁸

Drawing on Easton’s framework of regime support, Euroscepticism could also be viewed as exhibiting anti-authority (opposition to EU public officials), anti-regime (suspicion manifested towards underlying EU norms), and anti-community (premised on negative attitudes towards other EU member states) elements.²¹⁹

Arguably the most relevant theoretical lens, for the purposes of this thesis, focuses on Euroscepticism within the party-based microcosm. Essentially, it looks into the explanatory factors behind the opposition to (or favorable disposition towards) the European project when it comes to major and fringe party actors. Two main strands of thought seem to dominate this literature. On the one hand, taking account of cleavage theories, some analysts like Marks and Wilson hold inner party ideology as the most significant predictor of attitudes towards

²¹⁷ Arnold, Christine, Eliyahu V. Sapir and Galina Zapryanova. *Trust in the institutions of the European Union: a cross-country examination* (2012), p. 8.

²¹⁸ Badzhakov, Momchil. *Елементи на Фасадната Демокрация* (Elements of the Façade Democracy) (2008).

²¹⁹ Serrichio, Fabio, Myrto Tsakatika and Lucia Quaglia. *Euroscepticism and the Global Financial Crisis* (2013), p. 52. (citing David Easton. *A Re-assessment of the Concept of Political Support*, 1975).

the EU. “The new issue of European integration is assimilated into pre-existing ideologies of party leaders, activists and constituencies that reflect long-standing commitments on fundamental domestic issues”.²²⁰ In order to cement their argument, such authors point out that communist or radically nationalist actors tend to be unabashedly Eurosceptic, as the EU is seen to be fundamentally at loggerheads with their ideological underpinnings – e.g. the priority placed on an independent course of development (such as economic autarchy) by many staunchly nationalistic actors.²²¹ Marks and Wilson, however, do not see certain ideological proclivities as set in stone. For instance, they note the transformation of the attitudes of social democratic parties (towards a more benign opinion of the EU) during the 1980s and 1990s. This is attributable to the EU’s efforts to provide a social policy cushion to the initiatives concerning themselves with the internal market.²²²

Consistent with the assertions introduced above, Vasilopoulou has postulated that there are two primary opposing dyads when it comes to party orientations – the socialist-capitalist one and the authoritarian-libertarian one (also conceptualized as the Gal/Tan antipode). While the Left/Right dimension revolves around different philosophies pertaining to economic redistribution and welfare, the Green/Alternative Libertarian (Gal) and Traditionalist/Authoritarian/Nationalist (Tan) dimension encompasses attitudes towards non-economic issues like those of a cultural nature.²²³ In a nutshell, parties that hold strong affinities for authoritarian values and cluster with pro-socialist factions, are regarded as inherently more Eurosceptic than those that cling to libertarian values (e.g. pertaining to inner party hierarchies) and are supportive of the capitalist or neo-liberal economic model.²²⁴ This

²²⁰ Marks, Gary and Carole J. Wilson. *The Past in the Present – a Cleavage Theory of Party Response to European Integration* (2000), p. 435.

²²¹ *Ibid*, pp. 435-440.

²²² Hooghe, Liesbet, Gary Marks, and Carole J. Wilson. *Does Left/Right Structure Party Positions on European Integration?* (2002), pp. 974-975.

²²³ Marks, Gary, Liesbet Hooghe, Erica Edwards, and Moira Nelson. *Party Ideology and European Integration: an East-West Comparison* (2004), pp. 1-3.

²²⁴ Vasilopoulou, Sofia. *Varieties of Euroscepticism – the case of the European Extreme Right* (2009), pp. 13-15.

applies to both the Western European and CEE contexts in roughly equal measure. However, populist right and conservative party families tend to be slightly more diverse in the CEE realm, while liberal and radical left party families are likely to be more coherent and unified (relative to their counterparts in the West).²²⁵ Henderson maintains that it is quite likely that these differences between the CEE and Western European realm will gradually be eroded, as a “programmatic convergence” with the parties in the “old” member states is bound to occur at a certain point in time.²²⁶ For instance, the policy programmes and campaigning techniques of the CEE parties will eventually become rather similar to those of their colleagues in the West.²²⁷ Also, their ideological orientations will start to align with each other, e.g. there would be a neat fit between the positions of CEE and Western conservatives when it comes to general issues like degrees of economic openness.²²⁸

Alternatively, theorists like Bartolini (2001) see conflicts about European integration as being largely independent from and actually transcending domestic political cleavages: he associates party politics with a process of boundary closure that shaped the development of the modern state, but regards the principle of European integration as “providing an opening of national socio-economic systems that disrupts the traditional lines of political conflict”.²²⁹ Similarly, scholars such as Taggart tend to downplay the ideological grounding of party-based Euroscepticism, emphasizing the salience of party strategies. In this regard, the mainstream-fringe dynamic is explored, with the former actors being regarded as strategically pro-European due to their incentive to enter governments (or the upper echelons of power), while the latter are perceived as displaying a much higher likelihood of entering the

²²⁵ Marks, Gary, Liesbet Hooghe, Erica Edwards, and Moira Nelson. *Party Ideology and European Integration: an East-West Comparison* (2004), pp. 1-3.

²²⁶ Henderson, Karen. *Exceptionalism or Convergence? Euroscepticism and Party Systems in Central and Eastern Europe* (2008), pp. 124-125.

²²⁷ Holmes, Michael and Simon Lightfoot. *Limited Influence? The Role of the Party of European Socialists in Shaping Social Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe* (2011), p. 33.

²²⁸ Ibid.

Eurosceptic fray due to their need to sharply differentiate themselves from mainstream actors and garner the votes of more narrow segments of the electorate. “Parties that are peripheral to political systems are more predisposed to using Euroscepticism as a mobilising issue than parties more central to political systems”.²³⁰

In addition, there is some merit to the contention that even if lacking genuinely pro-European orientations, parties in government tend to regard European integration as better equipping the country to deal with issues like political efficiency.²³¹ In Scharpf’s view, nation-states have to a large extent become dependent on European solutions in order to be able to manage the “spillover” problems caused by the previous successes of European integration.²³² Sitter also suggests that when Eurosceptic parties aspire to participate in a governing coalition, they are expected to modify or avoid Euroscepticism because of its potential electoral cost. For example, due to these parties’ inevitable involvement in the shaping of the integration process in the previous years, they run the risk of accusations of hypocrisy should there be a sudden volte-face in their positions on the EU issue. The same applies to mainstream opposition parties, whose past actions have inevitably been closely intertwined with the EU integration process.²³³ In this regard, it also has to be noted that there appears to be a tacit consensus that party elites remain important players in terms of their capacity to shape public opinions towards EU integration.

A rational actor perspective, as put forward by *inter alia* Simon Hix sees opposition to the EU as quite fluid, with parties tending to adjust their strategies (and purported attitudes

²²⁹ Morgan, Glyn. *Restructuring Europe: Centre Formation, System Building, and Political Structuring between the Nation-State and the European Union* (2006), pp. 341-344 (citing Stefano Bartolini. *Challenges to Contemporary Political Parties*, 2001).

²³⁰ Halikiopoulou, Daphne, Sofia Vasilopoulou, and Kiriaki Nanou. *The Paradox of Nationalism – the Common Denominator of Radical Left and Radical Right Euroscepticism* (2010), pp. 5-6 (citing Paul Taggart. *A Touchstone of dissent: Euroscepticism in contemporary Western European party systems*, 1998, p. 384).

²³¹ *Ibid*, p. 7.

²³² Scharpf, Fritz W. *Problem Solving Effectiveness and Democratic Accountability in the EU* (2003), pp. 20-21.

²³³ Halikiopoulou, Daphne, Sofia Vasilopoulou, and Kiriaki Nanou. *The Paradox of Nationalism – the Common Denominator of Radical Left and Radical Right Euroscepticism* (2010), pp. 7-8.

towards the EU), based on contextual factors like the degree to which they see themselves as empowered thanks to the new playing field created by the EU. Essentially, Hix stipulates that Eurosceptics could very easily be converted into EU supporters, should they see a sufficient number of benefits to their closer embeddedness into the EU structures.²³⁴ Concretely, Sitter and Batory posit that small agrarian parties are likely to adopt a radically Eurosceptic stance only if a multitude of conditions are met – European integration conflicts with their overarching ideologies and identities; the interests of their target electorate are seriously threatened by integration; the pressures of coalition politics do not outweigh the predicted dividends that could be gained by mobilizing the dissatisfaction of their supporters when it comes to the EU project.²³⁵ Also, a party's general assessment of European integration does not necessarily overlap with the “pattern of Euroscepticism” displayed by it, as there are a number of intervening variables that have to be taken into account like the concrete issues emerging out of the European integration processes that have to be engaged with.²³⁶

Throughout the thesis, I draw on the highly relevant distinction between “hard” and “soft” Euroscepticism, with the underlying aims of the dissertation propelling me to exclusively consider parties falling within the framework of “soft” Eurosceptics. Before taking a look at the divergences between Eastern and Western Euroscepticisms, one further note is required to minimize any confusion as to my own preferred use of the term.

²³⁴ Hooghe, Liesbet. What drives Euroscepticism? Party-Public Cueing, Ideology, and Strategic Opportunity (2007), p. 8 (citing Simon Hix. Euroscepticism as Anti-Centralization: a Rational Choice Institutional Perspective, 2007, pp. 136-137).

²³⁵ Batory, Agnes and Nick Sitter. Cleavages, competition and coalition-building: Agrarian parties and the European question in Western and East Central Europe (2004), pp. 525-526.

²³⁶ Szczerbiak, Aleks and Paul Taggart. Introduction: Researching Euroscepticism in European Party Systems: A Comparative and Theoretical Research Agenda (2008), p. 11.

My personal definition of party-based “soft” Euroscepticism revolves around the satisfaction of the following criteria:

- a) Opposition to the current trajectory and direction of EU integration (in brief, parties that are adamant that there needs to be “less EU”);
- b) Emphasis on “renegotiating”, “overhauling”, “restructuring” or going back to a previous configuration of the European Union – for instance, the making of statements on the desirability of returning to the “old” EU prior to the Mediterranean enlargement in the case of the PVV²³⁷ or the perceived need for the altering of the geopolitical orientation of the European Union, as evidenced by the “remake the EU by closely involving Russia” rhetoric engaged in by Ataka,²³⁸ which has at the same time refrained from explicitly indicating any support for Bulgaria’s participation in a hypothetical “Eurasian Union”. This willingness to entertain the thought of working to peel back what are regarded as the worst excesses of the EU and thus seeing it as somewhat redeemable instead of settling for an outright rejection is one of the main differences setting such parties apart from the “hard” Eurosceptics.
- c) Acceptance (in theory) of a strong role for the EU in at least one “core domain” – even the PVV, which now feels at home in “hard” Eurosceptic territory and extols UKIP’s philosophy on the EU, frequently acknowledges that countries need to be able to trade without too many restrictions and EU-like entity serving as a facilitator is needed to attain this aim.²³⁹ Thus, the notion of economic interdependence is not conceptualized as a negative by definition and has some sort of an inherent value.

²³⁷ Author’s interviews with various PVV members.

²³⁸ *Btv news*. *Страхът от БСП и ДПС ще се отпусне, когато паднат от власт* (People will give expression to their fear of BSP and the MRF when the two parties relinquish power), 29 November 2013.

²³⁹ Author’s interviews with various PVV members.

d) Exclusion of what are conventionally regarded as single-issue parties with anti-EU leanings. To take one example, the AfD is presently still at this stage and in some respects fits the definition of a “soft” Eurosceptic, but while there is unshakable intra-party consensus when it comes to its opposition to the euro currency, the party is plagued by a high level of programmatic incoherence and a lack of a clearly articulated vision or ideological consolidation with regard to the role of the EU in other policy domains.²⁴⁰ Given that the thematic scope of my dissertation goes way beyond single issue areas, such a party would possibly not be the most appropriate to analyze for the purposes of the dissertation²⁴¹ (though as I mention in the last paragraph of the party selection rationale section, consulting with some experienced figures within the ranks of the AfD with prior membership in other Eurosceptic parties could have indeed added to the revelations made by the REP politicians), which is part of the reason I do not yet see it as belonging to the category of full-fledged “soft” Eurosceptics.

The section covering the reasoning behind the party selection will demonstrate how all the four parties under scrutiny show (or have for prolonged periods in their recent existence been in conformity with) the abovementioned features of “soft Euroscepticism”.

²⁴⁰ Euractiv. Germany’s Eurosceptic AfD meets to define party platform, 21 March 2014.

3.2 Some peculiarities of CEE Euroscepticism

3.2.1 Underlying conditions in Central and Eastern Europe

As already stated, there is a degree of variation between the reverberations of Europeanization in the case of the EU “newcomers” and the EU “old” member states. Causes include factors connected to the new member-states themselves but also derive from evolving EU policy. The presence of a number of underlying conditions in the CEE context, outgrowths of the Soviet-like system of governance, but also of the general trajectories of national development, have to be acknowledged before attempting to estimate the degree to which the EU policies directed at this region have been different in comparison to those that were intended for other “new” EU members like Greece and Portugal in the more distant past.

In the aftermath of the communist system’s collapse, the CEE countries were shaped by up to four simultaneous transitions – in some cases from being a constituent of a federal state to national independence; and in all cases from one party dictatorship to democracy, from a planned economy to a capitalist one, and from a largely autarchic economy to an open one.²⁴² In the case of the states that emerged from under the communist shadow, the EU has been gauged to have caused setbacks pertaining to the first transition, in the sense of restricting the playing field with regard to the freedom to adopt nationally minded policies. Accordingly, as early as the mid 1990s, the Hungarian Smallholder Party issued a warning regarding the risks of weakening national identity should Hungary enter the EU prematurely.²⁴³ The supranational community has been evaluated as being supportive with regard to the second

²⁴¹ Pennings, Paul. *An Empirical Analysis of the Europeanization of National Party Manifestos, 1960–2003* (2006), pp. 265-268.

²⁴² Swoboda, Hannes and Jan Marinus Wiersma. *Democracy, Populism and Minority Rights* (2008), pp. 31-32.

transition, and has significantly influenced the latter two ones (the nature of economic transformations).²⁴⁴ Economic causes of Euroscepticism were often paramount in the case of quite a few CEE states, especially in the mid-to late 1990s. For instance, in the late 1990s, there was a significant downward trend in popular acceptance of EU membership in Poland, to a large extent because of economic concerns like the effects of EU policies on farmer subsidies and the sale of agricultural lands to non-Polish citizens.²⁴⁵ Arguably, the pro-Americanism of countries like Poland and the Czech Republic may have aligned with the fears related to economic issues due to these countries' realization that the United States had started to noticeably outpace Europe in terms of productivity with regard to the market-oriented sectors of the economy.²⁴⁶

The normative impacts of the EU are also not to be understated, with the “return to Europe” slogans providing the impetus (“enabling impact”) for the efforts of reform actors in these countries, and essentially allowing pro-EU stakeholders to sell certain policy measures to their constituents even in the absence of short-term or visible utility gains. Essentially, the “return to Europe” frame is frequently seen to have struck a chord with the electorate in CEE countries and consequently few autarchic-minded nationalists would have benefited much from a ubiquitously anti-EU position.²⁴⁷ Furthermore, there are some tacit indications that smaller states like Hungary, in contrast to Poland, were more open to EU accession, as even staunch nationalists in such countries found it easier (at least in the 1990s) to identify a significant security dividend to EU membership.²⁴⁸

²⁴³ Sitter, Nick and Agnes Batory. *Protectionism, Populism, or Participation? Agrarian Parties and the European Question in Western and East Central Europe* (2008), p. 63.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁵ Henderson, Karen. *Developments in the Applicant States* (2004), p. 159.

²⁴⁶ Turner, Adair. *What's wrong with Europe's economy?* (2003), p. 4.

²⁴⁷ Batt, Judy. 'Fuzzy' Statehood versus Hard Borders: the Impact of EU enlargement on Romania and Yugoslavia (2002), pp. 6-10.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

In addition, in the early phase (and in some cases still persisting to this day) of post-communist transformation, the party systems in the CEE region were much more fragmented and less institutionalized than those in their Western counterparts, the inner party structures were quite hierarchical, and there was an absence of strong civil societies operating within these states.²⁴⁹ The participation of the regional and local elites and institutions of the CEE states during the period leading up to the 2004 EU enlargement was marginal; the governing national elites were the ones in control and were by far the most involved when it came to negotiations.²⁵⁰ There was a “significant fragmentation of norms between national and sub-national elites”, as these two stakeholders were not exposed to Europeanizing influences to the same extent and tended to view the benefits of enlargement in different ways.²⁵¹ Regional development agencies that were established as an outgrowth of the enlargement process did not play an active role in fostering connections between the different elite levels, as they were usually skeletal structures and remained plagued by corruption.²⁵² One could arguably speak of an implicit division of labor between national and sub-national elites, with the latter devoted to managing the immediate transition issues without dedicating much thought to the reverberations arising out of European integration.²⁵³

The overarching type of nationalism associated with CEE is another variable that could potentially help account for the specific issues encountered in the East in connection with the adoption of EU standards. Civic nationalism is premised upon the citizens’ identification with fellow members of the nation-state based on adherence to common political principles or institutional mechanisms. Ethnic nationalism tends to emphasize the role of ethnic categories

²⁴⁹ Lewis, Paul G. *The EU and Party Politics in Central and Eastern Europe: Questions and Issues* (2006), p. 8.

²⁵⁰ Hughes, James, Gwendolyn Sasse, and Claire Gordon. *How Deep Is the Wider Europe? Elites, Europeanization, and Euroscepticism in the CEECs* (2008), pp. 191-192.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 192-197.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 195.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

of belonging which are in turn constructed by aspects like common descent and language.²⁵⁴ Civic nationalists are as a whole less preoccupied with imagined threats to one's nation than their ethnic counterparts, i.e. when it comes to proclivity to emphasize the need to retain "ethnic purity" and exclude outsiders from one's cultural circles.²⁵⁵

Some theorists like Liah Greenfeld depict Eastern European culture in the 19th century, the period between the two world wars, as well as in the aftermath of the communist collapse as very much shaped by ethnic nationalism.²⁵⁶ Brubaker echoes this sentiment, characterizing CEE nationalisms as exhibiting "nationalizing" tendencies, in essence favoring "majority" nations at the expense of "minority" ones.²⁵⁷ Similarly, Bøllerup and Christensen describe the national revivals in Eastern Europe in the aftermath of the dissolution of the USSR as premised on "strong ethnic foundations in the form of *ethnies*", with the solid ethnic bases viewed as one of the factors conducive to the rapid increase in the popularity of national movements,²⁵⁸ though Schulze also maintains that the ethnic nationalist fervour did not undermine the liberal and democratic components of these movements.²⁵⁹ By contrast, the Western European domain is characterized as a playing field for civic nationalists. A common argument stipulates that in countries like England and France, the political definition of the nation tended to overlap with existing political boundaries and the inclusion of more and more people was seen as a natural manifestation of nationalism. By contrast, in the 19th century, many CEE states gradually carved themselves out of collapsing empires and needed to construct a distinct national identity as a way to justify their preference for

²⁵⁴ Zimmer, Oliver. *Boundary mechanisms and symbolic resources: towards a process-oriented approach to national identity* (2003), p. 174.

²⁵⁵ Allen, Richard. *Nationalism and Contemporary German Politics: Inclusion vs Exclusion* (2010), p. 3 (citing Liah Greenfeld. *Nationalism and Modernity*, 1996).

²⁵⁶ Blokker, Paul. *Populist Nationalism, Anti-Europeanism, Post-nationalism, and the East-West distinction* (2005). p. 376.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 376. (citing Rogers Brubaker. *National Minorities, Nationalizing States, and External National Homelands in the New Europe – Notes toward a relational analysis*, 1993, pp. 7-8).

²⁵⁸ Bøllerup, Søren Rinder and Christian Dons Christensen. *Nationalism in Eastern Europe: Causes and Consequences of the National Revivals and Conflicts in Late-Twentieth Century Eastern Europe* (1997), p. 272.

sovereign/independent national course of development. In short, many CEE countries arose out of movements for self-determination and this necessitated a greater degree of exclusivity in the definition of the boundaries of the nation.²⁶⁰ They were also not in a position to pursue imperial policies (unlike their Western European counterparts) and thus the state did not manage to displace the nation in terms of symbolic weight.²⁶¹ In Brubaker's terms, "Eastern European nation-states were never a neutral arena of group interest conflict. Historically the "core nation" has been considered to legitimately own the polity."²⁶² With regard to more recent developments, Debeljak characterizes the CEE states as having emerged out of the Soviet sphere of influence with a lesser degree of familiarity in dealing with globalization processes and a "fresh" feel for nationalism – "whereas Western Europeans have discussed the decline of the nation-state within the context of globalization for quite some time, Eastern Europeans actually hopped on the last car of the last train of nationalism as a legitimate movement toward a nation-state".²⁶³ While the countries in the West are seen to have made use of the opportunities offered by an erosion of national boundaries, since the early 1990s those in the CEE realm were tempted to engage in a rather different exercise – the assertion and consolidation of national boundaries in order to expunge the memories of Communist transnational domination.²⁶⁴ At the most extreme, public debates in CEE Europe at times saw the surfacing of viewpoints which effectively whitewashed the crimes of wartime right-wing regimes that had collaborated with the Nazis as in the case of Croatia and Slovakia.²⁶⁵ In an

²⁵⁹ Schulze, Hagen. *Staat und Nation in der europäischen Geschichte (State and Nation over the course of European history)* (2002), pp. 335-336.

²⁶⁰ Blokker, Paul. Populist Nationalism, Anti-Europeanism, Post-nationalism, and the East-West distinction (2005), pp. 374-375.

²⁶¹ Baewa, Iskra. *Източна Европа през XX век. Идеи, конфликти, митове (Eastern Europe in the 20th century. Ideas, Conflicts, Myths)* (2010), p. 233.

²⁶² Medianu, Narcisa. Analysing Political Exchanges between Minority and Majority Leaders in Romania (2002), p. 34 (citing Rogers Brubaker. *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, 1996).

²⁶³ Siim, Birte and Judith Squires. *Contesting Citizenship* (2008), pp. 25-26 (citing Aleš Debeljak. *European Forms of Belonging*, 2003, pp. 154-155).

²⁶⁴ Demossier, Marion. *The Political Structuring of Cultural Identities in Europe* (2007), p. 62.

²⁶⁵ Vinen, Richard. *'More Than Its Fair Share of History': Europe and its Recent Past* (2007), pp. 40-41.

ironic twist, the higher degree of cultural homogeneity in the CEE countries than in the “old” EU members (or the lack of significant experience with multiculturalism), may have been used as “cannon fodder” by nationalist-populist actors in these countries in a different fashion: an issue which will be explored in depth in later chapters of this thesis. For instance, Ralchev has coined the notion of “imposition of a minority discourse” by the EU to refer to the pressure on the CEE governments and general society actors’ (through conditionality mechanisms or normative influences) to “socialize” themselves and implement positive policy measures pertaining to minorities (e.g. in the case of the Roma, which had for a long time been neglected by the mainstream).²⁶⁶ The relative lack of visibility of minority issues prior to the start of the process towards EU accession is one aspect that has been seen as typifying the CEE experience. For instance, in the early 1990s, it has been affirmed that there was quite a bit of a common ground between staunch conservatives and liberal-democrats in Central and Eastern Europe pertaining to the possible repercussions of granting substate autonomies or significantly increasing “group rights” of minorities.²⁶⁷ In the CEE context, there was also the entrenched perception that minority nationalisms would better be swept under the carpet, and that they would gradually fade away as a result of processes like modernization and improvements in the national economy.²⁶⁸ In the early 1990s, in the majority of CEE states, ethnic minorities were deemed to have either been marginalized or to have been assimilated. The legacies of Soviet (and, in part, earlier German domination) are thought to have played a part in this and posed problems for the EU’s liberal and democratic approach towards ethnic minorities.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁶ Ralchev, Plamen. *Europeanization and the Instrumentality of Imposing a Minority Discourse – Reflections on Bulgaria’s and other CEE new EU member and candidate countries’ experience* (2008), pp. 4-6.

²⁶⁷ Kymlicka, Will, *Multiculturalism and Minority Rights: West and East* (2002), p. 18.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ Liebert, Ulrike. *Dilemmas of Citizenship in the Enlarging Europe: Negotiating Diversity within Equality across the East-West Divide* (2008), p. 26.

In this regard, there is one aspect that neatly separates the “new” CEE states’ and the “old” Western states’ constitutions – the intensity of affirmation of the countries’ core national identities. According to 2005 figures compiled by Kubiš, while the number of references to the country name or nationality in the old member states constitutions is relatively low, ranging from 12 in the Danish constitution to 86 in the various informal sources of the UK constitution like the statutory laws, in the new member states only the Czech Republic and Latvia have a comparable record (45 and 42 respectively). The level of affirmations of nationality in the other accession states ranges from Estonia (107) to Slovakia (399).²⁷⁰ The reluctance to engage with minority issues (or the much higher likelihood to regard them through a security prism in comparison to in Western Europe, especially in cases of fears of secession) in the early post-independence (or post-Soviet) stages is not to be downplayed given the continued salience of certain entrenched national identities.²⁷¹

Alternatively, the existence of a sharp divide between the “Eastern” and “Western” brand of nationalism is regarded as dubious. For instance, Western European nationalism is also viewed as actually being quite exclusionary on ethnic grounds. Such arguments often focus on 19th century imperialism and conceptions of Western “racial” superiority.²⁷² Some Western countries like Ireland, Spain, Belgium, Germany and Greece only became part of the “true Western nationalism” (civic) camp in the years after 1945.²⁷³ Peter Sugar maintains that nationalism originated from Western Europe; however, he argues that when it entered Eastern Europe, it gradually became similar to the most aggressive and chauvinistic nationalisms of Western Europe. As the Eastern European nations were influenced by Orthodoxy and did not

²⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 22.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Blokker, Paul. *Populist Nationalism, Anti-Europeanism, Post-nationalism, and the East-West distinction* (2005), p. 376.

²⁷³ Kuzio, Taras. *Nationalising states or nation-building? A critical review of the theoretical literature and empirical evidence* (2001), p. 147.

experience the Renaissance, the Scientific Revolution and the Reformation, their relative backwardness caused them to attach a greater meaning to nationalism than in its “birth place”.²⁷⁴

Doubt is also cast on the assertion that ethnic and civic nationalism represent two sharply opposing poles. Instead, individual nationalisms are seen as containing a mixture of ‘ethnic’ and ‘civic’ constituents. In both cases, a form of collective identity is being constructed and “thick”, “emotive” elements are present in civic nationalism as well, as value differences are sometimes equated with cultural divergences and there are still possibilities for excluding “others” on seemingly trivial grounds.²⁷⁵ In addition, insofar as there does seem to be more evidence of ethnic nationalism in CEE, the preponderance of populist discourses in some CEE states could merely reflect the polarization and loss of credibility of traditional “moderate” parties, resulting from the rapid social and economic transformations, characterizing the post-communist periods.²⁷⁶

To sum up, there is not much in the way of consensus with regard to the degree to which there are divergences in the way nationalism is manifested and interacts with Europeanization in the Eastern and the Western parts of the continent. It may be fallacious to assert the existence of a schism between the two regions with regard to prevalent types of nationalism. Later chapters of the thesis will explore the extent to which there is actual evidence for such a divide.

²⁷⁴ Todorova, Maria. *Клопката на изоставането: модерност, темпоралност и източноевропейският национализъм* (*The perils of backwardness: modernity, temporality and the Eastern European nationalism*) (2005), pp. 4-5 (citing Peter F. Sugar. *Eastern European Nationalism in the twentieth century*, 1995).

²⁷⁵ Blokker, Paul. Populist Nationalism, Anti-Europeanism, Post-nationalism, and the East-West distinction (2005), p. 376.

²⁷⁶ Dechezelles, Stephanie and Laure Neymayer. Introduction. Is Populism a Side-Effect of European Integration? Radical Parties and the Europeanization of Political Competition (2010), pp. 230-234.

3.2.2 The perceived over-readiness of political parties in CEE to “Europeanize” as a cause of Euroscepticism

One impact of Europeanization that may be specific to the CEE context is linked to the parties’ relationships with the electorate. In some respects the distance between CEE party actors and the other sections of society has increased in comparison to the early 1990s period. This has occurred despite the EU’s intention to avoid such a development. In Ágh’s conception, the European Party Internationals or EPIs have strongly influenced the CEE parties, with many of them showing a willingness to “overadjust” to the European party families’ demands, often ignoring the conditions on the ground or the expectations of their constituencies.²⁷⁷ In this sense, Ágh speaks of a “weak conversion function from social cleavages to party political profiles” in the case of mainstream CEE parties (like the BSP in Bulgaria in the late 1990s), with many of them easily becoming unflinching supporters of EU membership and losing touch with their fringe (usually less politically moderate) electorate.²⁷⁸ Sceptics are thus likely to decry what they see as a collusive turn in the party system due to all parties supposedly speaking the same language (similar to ‘Eurospeak’ in the European Parliament) and not being in true competition with each other.²⁷⁹

The context in which this distancing between party leaders and the electorate has taken place is the “over-particization” that occurred in the aftermath of the Communist collapse.²⁸⁰ The political scene was essentially monopolized by parties and instrumental motivations like vote-seeking tended to be ascribed to all types of collective actions – the oversatiation with political organizations contributed to the fostering of a climate of alienation from politics and

²⁷⁷ Ágh, Attila. *The Adolescence of East Central European Democracies: Europeanization as an Opportunity for further Democratization* (2004), p. 8.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²⁷⁹ Hix, Simon, Amie Kreppel, and Abdul Noury. *The Party System in the European Parliament: Collusive or Competitive?* (2003), pp. 309-313.

low trust in democratic institutions. The traditional weakness of meso-level structures like civil society organizations (a remnant from the Communist times) has also not been rectified to a sufficient degree.²⁸¹ For instance, unlike in Western European countries, organized civil society in CEE was hardly involved in the EU accession process, often settling for consultation functions.²⁸² In a nutshell, a representation-participation paradox is deemed to have plagued many CEE countries, with accession being largely an elite-driven enterprise, hardly catering to the demands of and succeeding in familiarizing citizens with the main EU issues. Essentially, the “external” or façade Europeanization (in terms of the parties’ accommodation to EU partners and the expected patterns of “Western behavior”) has not really been complemented by “internal” Europeanization. This means that parties have been somewhat reluctant to forego their informational advantage pertaining to the prerequisites for EU accession or reform their internal organization and have tended to keep civil society actors in the dark with regard to the negative externalities of EU accession. Thus, they have made it more difficult for the latter to defend the interests of their constituencies and increased the likelihood of a post-accession dip in Euroenthusiasm.²⁸³ In this regard, Cas Mudde has advanced the argument that European integration is much more likely to enter the domain of “conflictual politics” in the CEE region than in the NWE region.²⁸⁴

3.3 Nationalist-populist parties, Euroscepticism, and effects of Europeanization

There are a multitude of typologies when it comes to parties falling within the “right” and “far right” side of the political spectrum. Ignazi makes a rough distinction between the

²⁸⁰ Ágh, Attila. *The Adolescence of East Central European Democracies: Europeanization as an Opportunity for further Democratization* (2004), p. 31.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 28.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

“old” or “traditional” right, essentially encompassing parties that have some ties to Nazi or Fascist ideology, albeit often peripheral, and the “new” right. These are, in essence, post-industrial parties, which are not averse to adopting extreme positions on issues like immigration and are further to the right than conventional conservative forces.²⁸⁵ The NPD (National Democratic Party of Germany), clearly espousing a biological conception of the German nation, is frequently cited as ticking the “old rightist” box, while the *Front National* (FN) of France, subscribing to an arguably more inclusive brand of nationalism, is deemed to be a good example of an entity falling within the latter category.²⁸⁶ The *Lega Nord* (LN) is also frequently cited as a new rightist populist party, but it represents a special case, as it tends to intertwine anti-establishment grievances with ethnoregionalist affinities and is thus arguably not a nationalist faction in the conventional sense.²⁸⁷

An alternative understanding of rightist actors is put forward by Betz. The German theorist utilizes the generic concept of right-wing populist parties and essentially tars parties like the NPD and the FN with the same brush, as he regards them all as being at loggerheads with the current democratic system in Western European democracies. This is because, although they refrain from directly attacking the foundations of the state or questioning the legitimacy of the state’s monopoly on the use of force, they are clearly not at ease with the dominant paradigms within these countries when it comes to matters like multiculturalism, the premium placed on individual vs. collective rights, and so on.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁴ Mudde, Cas. EU Accession and a New Populist Centre-Periphery Cleavage in Central and Eastern Europe” (2004), p. 3.

²⁸⁵ Kopeček, L’ubomir. The far right in Europe. A summary of attempts to define the concept, analyze its identity, and compare the Western European and Central European far right (2007), p. 283 (citing Piero Ignazi and Colette Ysmal. New and Old Extreme Right Parties: the French *Front National* and the Italian *Movimento Sociale*, 1992, pp. 110-111).

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Biorcio, Roberto. The *Lega Nord* and the Italian Media System (2003), p. 72.

²⁸⁸ Kopeček, L’ubomir. The far right in Europe. A summary of attempts to define the concept, analyze its identity, and compare the Western European and Central European far right (2007), pp. 284-285 (citing Hans-Georg Betz. The New Politics of Resentment: Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties in Western Europe, 1993, pp. 413-414).

Rightist actors in the CEE context have generally been much more guarded in their pronouncements pertaining to the EU project than their Western counterparts. The much higher visibility of “soft” (rather than “hard” Eurosceptics) in the CEE case (relative to the Western European one) could arguably partly be tied to the paucity of what have been dubbed “protectionist nationalists” in the “new” EU member states.²⁸⁹ In essence, issues pertaining to immigration have not been perceived to be as highly salient in the CEE context (by nationalist-populist factions) and connected to the influence of the EU, as post-communist states have not on the whole been regarded as being attractive destinations for immigrants from the rest of Europe or from other continents.

At the same time, the “post-EU-accession syndrome” has led to the deployment of soft Euroscepticism as an instrument of regaining national assertiveness and as an expression of the ordinary citizens’ disappointments because of the unfulfilled economic expectations in the aftermath of accession.²⁹⁰ In the context of the economic crisis, some CEE citizens who are increasingly disillusioned with their country’s membership in the EU’s supranational community, also express disappointment that the notion of “two-speed” or “multi-speed” Europe has now become a reality rather than merely a rhetorical exercise. The increasingly sharp divide between “core” and “periphery” countries is assumed to negate the whole purpose of the journey towards membership, as accession was supposed to bring all countries on roughly the same path towards development.²⁹¹

In the Western European realm, it has to be mentioned that in the case of most “new” (rather than traditional) rightist actors – returning to Ignazi’s classification - opposition to the

²⁸⁹ Csergo, Zsuzsa and James M. Goldgeier. *Nationalist Strategies and European Integration* (2004), pp. 288-290.

²⁹⁰ Hartleb, Florian. *European Project in Danger? Understanding Precisely the Phenomena “Euroscepticism, Populism and Extremism” in Times of Crisis* (2012), p. 52.

²⁹¹ Beck, Ulrich. *Das deutsche Europa: Neue Machtlandschaften im Zeichen der Krise (German Europe: the new power dimensions under the shadow of the crisis)* (2012), pp. 86-87.

EU has hardly been a cornerstone of their underlying ideology from a historical standpoint. For instance, the combination of a common internal market with barriers against the influx of people from outside the EU (at a time when the EU was confined to Western members) was perceived to be largely in line with the right-wing agenda. A major paradigm shift could be deemed to have occurred with the ratification of the Treaty on European Union (TEU). In essence, it appears to have rung warning bells for rightist actors, as the EU came to be seen as posing a major threat to the continued existence of the nation-state. To take one example, in the case of France, there was a marked rise in Eurosceptic sentiments in the months following the ratification of the TEU. The Rally for the Republic (RPR) party was especially vociferous in its criticisms, regarding the further envisioned moves towards European integration as part of a conspiracy to disarm the nation-state.²⁹² In Germany, the Social Democratic Party of the Democratic Union (DU) unabashedly invoked comparisons between Maastricht and the Treaty of Versailles, seeing the coming to an end of German history, arguably borrowing from Fukuyama's "end of history" rhetoric,²⁹³ with the EU seen as the embodiment of a permanent liberal order.

In Sørensen's terms, the type of Euroscepticism toyed with by nationalist-populist actors in the aftermath of Maastricht was characterized by certain divergences, based on the peculiarities of the political culture typifying the specific nation-state – for example, social and democratic Euroscepticism could be regarded as having solidly gained ground in France in the aftermath of ratification of the TEU, while in UK case, to take another instance, sovereignty-based Euroscepticism has been even prominent than in France since the early

²⁹² Hainsworth, Paul, Carolyn O'Brien, and Paul Mitchell. *Defending the Nation: the Politics of Euroscepticism on the French Right* (2004), p. 51.

²⁹³ Fukuyama, Francis. *Have we reached the end of history?* (1989), p. 2.

1990s.²⁹⁴ Some other rightist parties, which markedly shifted their rhetoric towards the EU in the 1990s, include the German REP and the Austrian Freedom Party (FP).²⁹⁵

4: The concept of populism and parties in the CEE and NWE countries

4.1 Characteristics of populist parties

As summarized by Jan Jagers, populism could be conceptualized in three principal ways: as an organizational form; as a style; and as a “thin ideology” in its own right. The “organizational form” understanding of populism regards it as a highly centralized type of party organization, in which a charismatic leader pulls the strings.²⁹⁶ In essence, this is an attempt by populists to escape from institutional complexities (through the emphasis on more direct channels of communication, as represented by the prominent role of the party figurehead) and to favorably compare themselves with the more bureaucratically inclined mass political (non-populist) parties.²⁹⁷ The political style definition of populism refers to the type of communication that is characteristically employed by members of populist parties. For instance, simplistic and direct language is preferred, the breaching of certain taboos (i.e. when it comes to the topics explored) is generally regarded as desirable and bombastic and inflammatory pronouncements are seen as potentially useful under certain circumstances. However, features like charismatic leadership and a clear demarcation of hierarchies are not

²⁹⁴ Hyman, Richard. *Trade Unions and Europe: Are the Members out of Step?* (2010), p. 7 (citing Catharina Sørensen. *Euroscepticism and the Danish EU opt-outs*, 2008, pp. 9-10).

²⁹⁵ Mudde, Cas. *Globalization: the Multi-faceted enemy?* (2004), p. 9.

²⁹⁶ Rooduijn, Matthijs. *Measuring Populism: Comparing Two Methods of Content Analysis* (2011), p. 1276 (citing Jan Jagers and Stefaan Walgrave. *Populism as political communication style: an empirical study of political parties' discourse in Belgium*, 2007, pp. 322-323).

²⁹⁷ Williams, Michelle Hale. *Evaluating the Populist Potential: Considering Implications, Preconditions and Long-term Viability* (2010), p. 9.

exclusively confined to populist parties.²⁹⁸ Conspiratorial thinking also tends to pervade populist discourses, especially those on the extreme right of the political spectrum²⁹⁹ and the emphasis on emotive aspects coupled with the central role played by a charismatic leader could lead to a tendency to conflate unrelated phenomena in an illogical fashion.³⁰⁰

However, Rooduijn maintains that such a conception of populism is insufficient by itself, as it focuses too much on the procedural aspects to the neglect of the substantive facets inherent in the term.³⁰¹ In order to make up for such an omission, Canovan's understanding of populism as a "thin ideology" is introduced. This relatively recent notion implies that populism is not as refined as "full" ideologies like liberalism and conservatism. Thus, it does not offer (though it may pretend to offer) an all-inclusive perspective on the political world, instead preferring to restrict itself to the examination of a confined range of subjects (e.g. immigration).³⁰² This conception also alludes to the opportunist nature of populists, who are always ready to exploit new opportunities whenever "hot" topics emerge and are quite flexible when it comes to fostering new alliances.

Taggart suggests that populist and anti-establishment parties are more likely to emerge and perform better in countries whose party systems are more cartelized – those in which there is a strong tradition of inter-party cooperation and accommodative strategies between party actors are common. The Netherlands and Germany are both generally considered to be highly cartelized, while the UK and Greece are located on the opposite side of the spectrum.³⁰³ Notably, the electoral resilience of the status quo opposing UKIP in British political life – possibly due to its ability to depict itself as offering an alternative to both the

²⁹⁸ Rooduijn, Matthijs. *Measuring Populism: Comparing Two Methods of Content Analysis* (2011), p. 1277.

²⁹⁹ Fennema, Meindert. *Populist parties on the right* (2004), pp. 10-11.

³⁰⁰ Canovan, Margaret. *Trust the People! Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy* (1999), pp. 6-7.

³⁰¹ Rooduijn, Matthijs. *Measuring Populism: Comparing Two Methods of Content Analysis* (2011), pp. 1277.

³⁰² Canovan, Margaret. *Trust the People! Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy* (1999), p. 6.

³⁰³ Abedi, Amir. *Anti-Political Establishment Parties – a Comparative Analysis* (2004), pp. 90-91 (citing Paul Taggart. *New Populist Parties in Western Europe*, 1995).

conservative political mainstream and the far right British National Party (BNP) – bucks this trend.³⁰⁴

The rather generic nature of the term “populism” could be quite useful, as it allows for a multitude of anti-systemic party actors to be put together, despite their different historical antecedents, brands of nationalism, positions adopted on economic issues, and so on. For instance, the label of populism could be seen to encompass the extreme right factions, which are characterized by aggressive conceptions of nationalism, as well as fascist underpinnings, and the reactionary right ones, which cling to aristocratic and religious values, but have no obvious radically nationalist precursors from a historical standpoint.³⁰⁵

While populism is conventionally understood as implying a critique of the role of the nation-state elites, it also opposes denationalization, as identified by Loch and Heitmeyer.³⁰⁶ In this regard, populism has a vertical dimension, which is connected to the inclination to separate oneself from established political institutions and refrain from unnecessary cooperation with mainstream parties as well as a horizontal one – typical of right-wing populists, as it lays premium on the separation from outsiders like foreigners and criminals belonging to one’s own ethnocultural group.³⁰⁷ Denationalization is associated with a dwindling of the power of the nation-state, as well as at the more extreme end, a near removal of references to the national community on the discourse level, with the EU project seen as a vivid example of such processes.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁴ Ford, Robert. Euroscepticism is now a powerful force for the radical right – and UKIP is well-placed to harness it (2012).

³⁰⁵ Berlet, Chip. *When Alienation Turns Right* (2006), pp. 117-118.

³⁰⁶ Rubavičius, Vitautas. *European Demos: Democracy Deficit and National Feelings* (2009), pp. 97-98 (citing Dietmar Loch and Wilhelm Heitmeyer. *Einleitung: Globalisierung und autoritäre Entwicklungen/Introduction: Globalization and authoritarian developments*, 2001).

³⁰⁷ Hartleb, Florian. *European Project in Danger? Understanding Precisely the Phenomena “Euroscepticism, Populism and Extremism” in Times of Crisis* (2012), p. 49.

³⁰⁸ Rubavičius, Vitautas. *European Demos: Democracy Deficit and National Feelings* (2009), pp. 97-98.

The emergence of a new cleavage linked to denationalization – the “integration/demarcation” one, which juxtaposes those who are inclined to defend the maintenance of national borders against those who promote the opening up and by extension the integration of the national community into supranational structures like the EU, provides a degree of legitimacy to populists, as they are to an extent seen as toeing a valid historical line.³⁰⁹

Even if there is a lot of common ground between the overarching aims and the rhetoric employed by the NWE and CEE populists, a number of relevant divergences, especially related to historical contexts, are worth discussing.

The legacies of the communist period are seen to have affected the development of populist sentiments. On many occasions, members of the communist upper echelons became opportunists by adopting the populist mantle and paving the way for the establishment of staunchly nationalist factions.³¹⁰ Terms like façade or hybrid democracy, suggesting the acceptance of democratic procedure on the surface, but also an eagerness to shatter its foundations in practice, were adopted to characterize the policies typifying the leadership of populists like Mečiar.

However, it has to be affirmed that inter-country divergences when it came to the manifestations of populism were quite significant. A number of factors have been identified as key in preordaining the development of strong populist factions or preventing their emergence: the type of the communist regime in the last period before its collapse; the form of resistance against communism that was employed; the degree to which the initial stages of the market transition process were deemed a success; the nature of elite relations (e.g. with

³⁰⁹ Kriesi, Hanspeter and Romain Lachat. Globalization and the transformation of the national political space: Switzerland and France compared (2004), p. 18.

³¹⁰ Vujacič, Veljko. From Class to Nation: Left, Right, and the Ideological and Institutional Roots of Post-Communist ‘National Socialism’ (2003), p. 388.

regard to the degree of combativeness and accommodativeness); and the presence of serious leftover issues from the communist period pertaining to the status of national minorities or certain constitutional arrangements.³¹¹

Arguably, the general political cynicism partly attributable to the semi-totalitarian nature of the communist regime has also resulted in a greater willingness to subscribe to an anti-intermediaries (opposed to meso-level institutions like parliaments or trade unions) populism rather than simply an anti-elite one (opposed to national governments) in comparison to Western Europe; in essence, the intermediary organizations are believed to be overly responsive to political guidance from prominent politicians or influential business people.³¹²

Still, country-specific explanations have been much more frequently advanced than in Western Europe to account for the nationalist trajectories and prospects for success of populist factions.³¹³ For example, between 1990 and 1998, nationalist-populist parties had a fringe presence in Hungary and there was a lack of political forces that openly raised questions regarding EU membership.³¹⁴ This situation has been attributed to Hungary's peaceful transition, which was led by intellectuals, the absence of prominent populist leaders, as well as the relatively permissive brand of communism, which created a less polarized atmosphere during the period of transition.³¹⁵

Albeit not clearly corroborated by other sources, Bochsler's research points towards a more symmetric nationalist dimension in the CEE countries in comparison to that in their Western European counterparts. This implies that the rise in the fortunes of a populist party usually tends to be a reaction to the (perceived) increase in influence or visibility of an ethnic

³¹¹ Skolkay, Andrej. *Populism in Central Eastern Europe* (2000), pp. 7-8.

³¹² Bugarič, Bojan. *Populism, Liberal Democracy and the rule of law in Central and Eastern Europe* (2008), pp. 191-195.

³¹³ Skolkay, Andrej. *Populism in Central Eastern Europe* (2000), pp. 7-8.

³¹⁴ Szczerbiak, Aleks and Paul A. Taggart (eds.). *Opposing Europe? Case Studies and Country Surveys* (2008), pp. 268-269.

minority party.³¹⁶ For example, the Bulgarian Ataka was seen to have made major inroads in the electoral arena at a time when the media and some of the mainstream parties became more eager to discuss the role in the political life of Bulgaria of the Turkish minority party, Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF).³¹⁷ In addition, there is probably a certain merit to the contention that in the CEE context there has been less of a stigma attached to the participation of openly nationalist-populist parties in government coalitions than in the Western one. Western European populist parties are frequently depicted as “secondary competitors”, but this has not universally been the case when it comes to the CEE region, as evidenced by the fact that parties like the Slovakian HZDS were able to govern their respective countries.³¹⁸

However, there also appears to have been some degree of convergence between the CEE and Western contexts in the years immediately preceding the former states’ accession to the EU with regard to the tactics adopted by the mainstream parties in their interactions with populists, as testified for instance by the moderate Bulgarian parties’ unwillingness to cooperate with Ataka in the 2005-2007 period³¹⁹ and the political ostracizing of factions like the Polish Self-Defense party at the regional level in Poland between 2002 and 2004.³²⁰

Right-wing populism in Western Europe is starkly associated with a strong criticism of the phenomena associated with globalization, especially when it comes to the new centres of political decision-making, and lays a marked emphasis on the national identity question and the drawbacks of socio-cultural heterogeneity. The 1999 political manifesto of the Austrian

³¹⁵ Ibid, p. 14.

³¹⁶ Bochsler, Daniel. The spread of the ethnic/nationalist divide over post-communist Europe (2007), p. 6.

³¹⁷ Stefanova, Boyka. Ethnic nationalism, social structure, and political agency: explaining electoral support for the radical right in Bulgaria (2009), pp. 1540-1542.

³¹⁸ Papadopoulos, Yannis. National-Populism in Western Europe: An Ambivalent Phenomenon (2000), p. 21.

³¹⁹ Ghodsee, Kristen. Left Wing, Right Wing, Everything – Xenophobia, Neo-totalitarianism and Populist Politics in Bulgaria (2008), p. 33.

³²⁰ Majcherkiewicz, Tatiana. Challenges of coalition-building in Poland: Experiences of central and regional politics (2003), p. 9.

FP is frequently seen as prototypical with regard to the overarching concerns of the Western European populists in relation to the EU – the EU is portrayed as imperiling the proper economic development and as a paragon of political corruption, while the possibility of CEE countries' accession is framed as a cultural threat.³²¹

Specifically, when it comes to the identification of parallels between the processes of globalization and Europeanization, the emphasis on the notion of “integration by stealth” is quite typical. The EU is regarded as being in a seemingly endless state of expansion (either due to the incorporation of new members or the increase in its competences) and is conceptualized as “heavy-handed transmitter or accelerator of globalization”.³²² The “stealth” aspect implies that distant “elites” like EU politicians and EU affairs specialists are the masterminds who keep the ball rolling in the integration, usually outside the gaze of the general public.³²³ As for the actual impact of Europeanization processes on populist factions, it is quite difficult for it to be properly measured, but the EU is without doubt frequently viewed as a “particular prism, which reflects more global trends at work also elsewhere”, e.g. when it comes to the imposition of constraints on nationalist discourses.³²⁴

More concretely, as it pertains to political entities, Kitschelt subdivides populists in Western Europe into three types. The new radical right (which has a presence in France, Denmark, Norway, and Belgium) is seen to represent a mixture of neoliberal, xenophobic and socially conservative beliefs. Anti-statist populists tend to operate in countries like Austria (becoming influential in the late 1990s) and remain in the neoliberal camp, but are somewhat less xenophobic and not as socially conservative. Welfare chauvinist populism is seen to be typical of German rightist factions like the German Republican Party (REP), where

³²¹ Binder, Tanja. *Ein kritisches Symptom – die Wahlerfolge rechtspopulistischer Parteien* (A crucial symptom – the electoral successes of right-wing populist parties) (2005), p. 52.

³²² Cuperus, Rene. *European Social Unease – a Threat to the EU?* (2006), p. 3.

³²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

³²⁴ Piattoni, Simona. *Personalistic Politics Across Institutional Levels. Political Entrepreneurship in Europe* (2000), p. 14.

xenophobia and social conservatism still reign supreme, but are also accompanied by a sharp critique of neoliberal policies.³²⁵

The relationship between populists and mainstream parties in the West is still a point of contention. Kitschelt (1995) sees populists as being fundamentally at loggerheads with established parties and their politics of consensus.³²⁶ Ignazi challenges this assertion, noting that minor inclinations to turn to the right on the part of moderate conservative parties actually serve to boost populist activity. In his view, during certain periods mainstream parties put controversial issues like immigration on the agenda, but are unable to accord them continued priority, especially once they have taken the reins of power. The populists then take up the baton and start to focus on such issues, for which openings had been provided by the mainstream parties. In this regard, it could be argued that there is no sharp break between populists and mainstream conservative stakeholders, but it is all a matter of gradations (i.e. when it comes to the degree to which a party engages with certain issues).³²⁷ However, it also has to be emphasized that since the 1970s, there has been an exponential increase in the influence of governing parties, i.e. due to their enhanced control over resources, which has been dubbed by Blondel as an “invasion of the state by the parties”.³²⁸ Thus, the differences in terms of control over public space between governing and opposition parties, with populist factions usually falling within the latter camp, have been markedly amplified, providing further legitimacy to the populists’ claims of the existence of fundamental divergences between “establishment” and “non-establishment” parties.³²⁹ As populists tend to romanticize the “common person” as being pure in spirit and especially loyal to the national

³²⁵ Papadopoulos, Yannis. *National-Populism in Western Europe: An Ambivalent Phenomenon* (2000), p. 8 (Citing Herbert Kitschelt. *The Radical Right in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis*, 1995).

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 18 (Citing Herbert Kitschelt. *The Radical Right in Western Europe*, 1995).

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

³²⁸ Blondel, Jean and F. Battagazzore. Have “Consociational” Forms of Parliamentary Government Ceased to Exist in Western Europe but is the Majoritarian Model on the Way to Becoming more “Cooperative”? (2003), pp. 13-17.

³²⁹ Ignazi, Piero. *The Questionable Legitimacy of the state-centred party* (2007), p. 15.

community,³³⁰ the increased distancing of the elites and their enhanced ability to “control the polity” (presumably allowing them to advance agendas that are to the detriment of the commoner) engender suspicions among them.

With regard to the actual factors behind the willingness of mainstream actors to concern themselves with matters that are usually promulgated by populists, the normal pathology thesis stipulates that they could be tied to the existence of a state of crisis within the country. Under normal conditions within Western democracies, the demand for the adoption of populist measures is assumed to be quite low, so the growth in populist activities is not regarded as part of the regular *modus operandi* of politics.³³¹ As outlined in the introduction of the thesis, it is dubious whether this still applies today given the political climate in a number of Western European states that has made it more socially acceptable for mainstream parties to accommodate populists.

In the concluding part of this section, I set my sights on providing some further pointers regarding the type of definition of populism employed in the thesis and its relation to the main leitmotifs in the dissertation. For the sake of the overarching aims of the dissertation, I consider a party to be populist if it fulfills two main criteria:

- a) an anti-establishment and anti-elite orientation in terms of rhetoric utilized, a striving to create or appropriate new policy frames when it comes to issues of national salience and a problematic interaction with mainstream parties that is plagued by frequent conflicts and either rules out any form of coalition-making or predisposes eventual coalitions towards instability;
- b) a tendency to view the majority group as unduly burdened by the illegal or anti-constitutional actions of ethnic, cultural, linguistic and/or sexual

³³⁰ Rioux, Jean-Pierre. *Les populismes (The populisms)* (2011), p. 35.

minorities (often assumed to be tolerated by the elites) and an inclination to think in terms of permanent or fixed cultural categories and regard inherent differences in identity as major fault lines that cause friction between majorities and minorities.

Coming back to point a), the four parties that I have chosen to analyze (see rationale for selection of parties section) also portray themselves as distinct from their mainstream counterparts, preferring to be recognized as having the markings of “irregular parties” or even departicized popular movements. One example of that is the unique structure of the PVV which is technically a one-man party, while those conventionally regarded as members, are actually associates and lack any official membership ID cards or the right to form youth wings. This first dimension of my definition of populism is essential, as on the level of the mainstream across the four national contexts the Europeanization of policy areas is generally (or was up until relatively recently) not a combustible issue in debates (see also the country specific sections of the dissertation). Thus, populist parties are quite attentive to EU-level decisions that affect domains connected to nationalism, as they do not want to miss their chance to construct a new policy frame and challenge what they view as an elite cartelization of politics.

As for point b), I emphasize the minority-majority dichotomy (remaining on the symbolic and emblematic level or reflecting real economic or cultural tensions within the wider society) as part of my definition of populism, because of my interest in the Europeanization of minority issues and the need to eliminate parties such as the AfD (with a lack of a clearly developed stance on ethno-cultural matters and arguably an elevated focus on economic determinism)

³³¹ Mudde, Cas. *The populist radical right: a pathological normalcy* (2008), pp. 1-2.

from the pool of case studies. For example, the PVV derives a lot of its popularity (and possibly its credentials as an anti-establishment party) from its ability to portray itself as a successor to the late Pim Fortuyn's *Lijst Pim Fortuyn* (LPF) (see sections on post-Maastricht system developments and majority-minority dynamics in the Netherlands) and expose the supposed cultural incompatibilities between Christian and Muslim Dutch. Similarly, the PRM's conspiratorial thinking appeals to the segments of Romanian society that are wary of the Hungarian communities' historical and contemporary influences on their society and are especially perturbed by the mainstream Romanian parties' seeking out of Hungarian coalition partners. The section on the choice of party selection offers further explanations as to the links between the ethnicization or culturalization of issues and the core identities of these four parties.

Lastly, in accordance with my goal of retaining objectivity, I stick to the term "populist" rather than "far right", "radical right", and so on, because perhaps to a larger extent than the other concepts it could under certain contexts be regarded as possessing a neutral connotation and even represent a yearning for a more sophisticated and purer form of democratic system within a state.³³²

³³² Mudde, Cas. *The Populist Zeitgeist* (2004), pp. 556-557.

4.2 Containment of nationalist-populist parties

The strategies for limiting the electoral appeal of Eurosceptic populist parties, especially at the level of national government and the EU, have not been extensively studied. Formal institutional constraints may affect the political opportunity structures in the case of such parties, but they are unlikely to have a significant effect on the nature of their policies.³³³

The highly prominent Jörg Haider affair (triggered by the January 2000 suspension of bilateral links with Austria by EU member states after the FP was included in the newly formed Austrian government) was deemed to have partially discredited the EU, especially with regard to the perceived legitimacy of the supranational community. While one of the main critiques of the EU sanctions concerned their contested legal basis, the potential occurrence of a “backfire effect” in terms of actually encouraging unmodulated sympathy voting for populists, was regarded as more worrisome (within the Austrian context itself, but also in terms of sending shock waves through other countries).³³⁴

However, research also suggests that long-term dividends could be reaped by the exclusion of rightist populists from participating in government, even if the short-term effects could lead to an empowerment of such factions. The main claim in this regard is that populists could face major difficulties if they permanently remained in opposition, as they increasingly start to be regarded as irrelevant in the long run. The successful imposition of a *cordon sanitaire* (involving all the major mainstream parties) could convince populist constituents to vote for more moderate “copy” parties, which take up some of the less radical

³³³ Almeida, Dimitri. *Approaches to the study of party responses to European integration* (2012), p. 35. (Citing Charles Lees. The political opportunity structure of Euroscepticism: institutional setting and political agency in European Politics, 2008, p. 47)

³³⁴ Howard, Marc Morje. Can Populism be Suppressed in a Democracy? Austria, Germany and the European Union (2000), pp. 25-26.

promises of the rightist populists.³³⁵ As aptly put by Rummens and Abts, “a sustained strategy of containment combined with an attempt to provide democratic alternatives for unsatisfied voters will, in the end, convince extremist voters that their vote is, indeed, a wasted one”.³³⁶ The decline in the fortunes of the Belgian *Vlaams Blok* and its successor *Vlaams Belang* which manifested itself at the 2009 regional and European elections has been partially attributed to the quarantine line imposed by its mainstream competitors.³³⁷

Still, such success stories are far from universal, with the institutional contexts within specific countries (i.e. thresholds for entering parliament) remaining important determinants regarding the potential for populist parties to recuperate from their forced isolation. Strategies of sustained isolation may not necessarily turn out to be as successful in countries like Italy or the UK as they have proven to be in Belgium.³³⁸

In the CEE realm, transnational party organizations and European political parties played on the relative inexperience and craving for legitimacy of CEE parties and imposed conditions on those which desired membership – ideological compatibility, democratic conditionality, and pro-EU commitment. In such a way, conformist pressure was exercised when it came to Eurosceptic parties and sometimes splits within their ranks occurred due to inner party conflicts over the degree to which they could adjust.³³⁹ Also, perceptions of nationalist-populist factions on the part of TPOs tended to be quite personalistic, as demonstrated by the serious difficulties encountered by Mečiar in the early 2000s when he tried to rebrand his previously Eurosceptic HZDS as a pro-EU party; the controversial Slovak

³³⁵ Ivarsflaten, Elisabeth. *Include, Exclude, or Coopt: How Political Parties affect Public Opinion towards new minorities in Western Europe* (2004), p. 10.

³³⁶ Pauwels, Teun. *Explaining the strange decline of the populist radical right Vlaams Belang in Belgium: The impact of permanent opposition* (2011), p. 62 (citing Stefan Rummens and Koen Abts. *Defending Democracy: the Concentric Containment of Political Extremism*, 2010, p. 663).

³³⁷ *Ibid.*

³³⁸ Van Spanje, Joost and Wouter van der Brug. *Being Intolerant of the Intolerant. The exclusion of Western European anti-immigration parties and its consequences for party choice* (2009), pp. 355-370.

³³⁹ Pridham, Geoffrey. *European Party Cooperation and Post-Communist Politics: Euroscepticism in Transnational Perspective* (2008), p. 100.

politician faced lukewarm reactions and was unable to pave the way for his party's acceptance into the European Democrat Union (EDU).³⁴⁰

Populism, as already suggested, is a complex phenomenon that renders itself to many different definitions, is not always an outgrowth of Europeanization processes and does not always correlate neatly with Eurosceptic sentiments. Also, the exact relationship between institutions (e.g. majoritarian vs. proportional electoral system) and the presence and relative potency of party-based Euroscepticism has so far not been precisely identified and may exhibit different manifestations depending on the national context.³⁴¹ While populist parties within and between European countries tend to be far from uniform with regard to organizational structures, degree of charismatic leadership, pre-eminence of exclusive nationalist rhetoric, as well as governance experience, there are bound to be commonalities pertaining to the way in which they are impacted by their countries' enmeshment in the EU structures. Identifying the nature of Europeanization dynamics in the case of a select number of such parties, as well as the degree to which they are inclined to allocate blame for any downward trends in their fortunes to the supranational structures, will be one of the principal aims of this thesis.

³⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 92.

Chapter Conclusion

Chapter One introduces the skeleton of the subject matter, starting off with some of the principal conceptualizations of Europeanization.

With regard to Europeanization, two main distinctions are emphasized – between an impositional understanding of Europeanization (historical institutionalism) and a less coercive one with a normative focus (sociological institutionalism). In relation to the CEE context, Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier’s analyses of political conditionality are referred to – the external incentives model stresses the superior bargaining position of the EU and the way in which it induces compliance on the part of member states (and also rests on some of the assumptions of “club theory”). Hooghe and Marks are cited in relation to the notion of “permissive consensus”, which is seen to have generally persisted up to the early 1990s in the case of Western European states, but to have continued to typify the political landscape in CEE countries up to the late 1990s or early 2000s, with “national interest” pronouncements on the part of CEE governments remaining residual up to this point in time.

Turning to the impact of Europeanization specifically on political parties, Chapter 1 suggests, following Poguntke and Pridham, that in practice political parties can feel frustrated by their lack of influence at the EU level and that only party elites and “EU specialists” are empowered by Europeanization. (In this regard, Pridham advances the argument that during the 1990s the newly emerged CEE party elites desperately strove for acceptance by the transnational party families, eagerly attempting to socialize themselves to the EU environment, but thereby potentially alienating their supporters). As for party organisation, overall, the literature suggests that the EU has had remarkably little impact on the organisation of national political parties.

³⁴¹ Lees, Charles. *The Political Opportunity Structure of Euroscepticism: Institutional Setting and Political*

By examining the specific case of the EU influence on ethnoregionalist factions, drawing on studies conducted by Bartolini, De Winter, Sandholtz and others, the thesis sheds light on the general reduction of the nation-state's monopoly on commanding the allegiance of its citizens and the way new openings have been provided to sub-national actors as a result of Europeanization processes. In a sense, there are marked parallels with the potential effects of "Euronationalism" on national solidarities (examined in Chapter Two), but a suborder category (the region or locality) rather than a super-order (EU super-state) was put under scrutiny. Chapter One then moves on from political parties to focus on the mechanics of Europeanization and pro-minority organizations. On the one hand, state-centred theorists such as Favell and Geddes or Moravcsik tend to be sceptical of the role of the European level in decision-making affecting minority groups, emphasizing instead the continued importance of the national level. On the other hand, 'post-national' theorists like Sandholtz posit that, thanks to Europeanization, minority organizations are largely in a position to insulate themselves from the oversight of the state and operate effectively on the EU level. On the whole, the literature suggests that non-party entities representing minority interests are more explicit than political parties in acknowledging and giving credit to the EU as a benefactor when it comes to the advancement of their claims.

The chapter then introduces Euroscepticism, the central concept of the thesis. As already suggested, nationalist-populist actors object to different strands of Europeanization (both redistribution of resources and norm diffusion) and this suggests that they exhibit varying forms of Euroscepticism. It is therefore helpful to consider Szczerbiak and Taggart's distinctions between principled and more strategic opposition to the EU project, as well as the three types of Euroscepticism identified by Kopecký and Mudde and the four dimensions discussed by Goertz.

As for country-specific manifestations of Euroscepticism, Medrano's analyses of the framing of national debates on EU issues and the influence of historical antecedents on the portrayal of the EU show the importance of taking into account national historical baggage when examining the concept. This provides extra justification for the comparative approach adopted in the thesis. (Chapter 3 introduces the historical background and discourses in the case study countries.)

The most relevant theoretical lens, for the purposes of this thesis, focuses on Euroscepticism within the party-based microcosm. Vasilopoulou's Gal/Tan contrasts regarding the ideological core of certain party families and their proclivity for expressing Eurosceptic sentiments are juxtaposed against Taggart's strategically grounded Euroscepticism, stressing the differences in attitudes between mainstream and fringe parties. Divergences between CEE and Western Europe in relation to Euroscepticism are compared and contrasted. With regard to the causes of Euroscepticism, the chapter makes use of Ágh's studies regarding the perceived readiness to "over-Europeanize" of certain CEE elites (provoking a Eurosceptic response); Brubaker's critiques of the supposedly inherently conflictual majority-minority relations and more ethnically based nationalisms in CEE states (relative to Western European states); Debeljak's insinuations that the CEE states emerged out of the totalitarian systems as rather ill-equipped to function in a globalized or Europeanized environment, as well as Ralchev's arguments regarding the forceful EU attempts to redefine the ways in which CEE countries deal with minority issues, in order to flesh out some of the divergences in points of departure between Eastern and Western populists.

However, the literature suggests that, overall, rightist actors in the CEE context have generally been much more guarded in their pronouncements pertaining to the EU project than their Western counterparts. The much higher visibility of "soft" Eurosceptics in the CEE case could arguably partly be tied to the paucity of what have been dubbed "protectionist

nationalists” in the new EU member states. In essence, issues pertaining to immigration have not been perceived to be as highly salient in the CEE context and connected to the influence of the EU, as post-communist states have not on the whole been regarded as being attractive destinations for immigrants from the rest of Europe or from the developing world. (This is discussed in more detail in Chapters 2-3 and provides a foreshadowing for H 3 elaborated in the concluding part of Chapter Two).

Moving on from Euroscepticism, Chapter One looks at the concept of populism. As summarized by Jagers, populism could be conceptualized in three principal ways: as an organizational form; as a style; and as a “thin ideology” in its own right. The rather generic nature of the term “populism” could be quite useful, as it allows for a multitude of anti-systemic party actors to be put together, despite their different historical antecedents, brands of nationalism, positions adopted on economic issues, and so on. This section of Chapter 1 compares the particular characteristics of nationalist-populist parties and their Euroscepticism in old and new member states, finding that country-specific explanations have been much more frequently advanced in Central and Eastern than in Western Europe to account for the nationalist trajectories and prospects for success of populist factions. However, Bochsler’s research points towards a more symmetric nationalist dimension in the CEE countries in comparison to that in their Western European counterparts. This implies that the rise in the fortunes of a populist faction usually tends to be a reaction to the (perceived) increase in influence or visibility of an ethnic minority party. This tendency is not clearly corroborated by other sources but the empirical chapters of the thesis will address this issue in an attempt to fill this gap in the literature.

The final section of the Chapter explores the small literature on how nationalist-populist parties can be contained (given that one of the aims of the thesis is to suggest how nationalist-populist parties might be reoriented in a more pro-EU direction).

Essentially, Chapter One prepares the ground by providing some general indications on why resentments (related to asymmetries in relation to the empowerment of anti-nationalist forces) among nationalist-populist actors could logically be viewed as attributable to certain Europeanization processes. While the chapter casts a wide net and does not delve into specificities, it also suggests that such asymmetries appear to be more pronounced in the case of CEE states. However, it only scratches the surface with regard to the analyses of the concrete issues that are deemed important by such parties. The next chapter, attempting to fill this gap, then turns to the specific subsets of issues, which are deemed likely to be at the forefront of nationalist-populist concerns, and from a theoretical standpoint, analyzes the degree to which the EU is likely to be seen as exercising a pacifying or a threatening influence when it comes to these domains.

Chapter Two – Specific issues that are likely to trigger Eurosceptic sentiments among nationalist-populist parties

Chapter Introduction

Chapter Two focuses on the matters that are likely to be at the heart of nationalist concerns and examines the parameters of the interactions between the EU and nation-states with regard to the various understandings of identity, the formal rules outlining belonging to the national community and the nature of national border controls. It discusses Europe in general, with only brief reference to the case study countries, which are explored in detail in Chapter Three.

As the agents who will be the main subject of this work tend to operate with “nationalist currencies”, there is a need to examine the way the EU level touches upon and potentially restructures some core areas of their ideology. Moreover, it is possible to argue that in the case of all types of Euroscepticism, nationalist concerns are always likely to lurk beneath the surface; in fact Euroscepticism has been characterized as a “mutated form” of a more zealous nationalism.³⁴² In Eichenberg and Dalton’s conception, European integration has shifted from “market making to polity building”; in essence, identity factors have overtaken economic ones in accounting for attitudes towards the EU.³⁴³ Anthony Smith identifies the abstract ideals of “autonomy, unity and identity” as constituting some of the lynchpins of all nationalist ideologies.³⁴⁴ In this regard, the changes to nation-state citizenship policies

³⁴² Duff, Andrew. *On dealing with Euroscepticism* (2013), p. 141.

³⁴³ Dowley, Kathleen M. and Brian D. Silver. *Support for Europe among Europe’s Ethnic, Religious, and Immigrant Minorities* (2011), p. 315 (citing Richard K. Eichenberg and Russell J. Dalton. *Post-Maastricht Blues: the Transformation of Citizen Support for European Integration, 1973-2004, 2007*, p. 132).

³⁴⁴ Smith, Anthony D. *Nationalism – Key Concepts* (2nd edition) (2010), p. 31.

triggered by EU processes could be deemed as threats to national autonomy (as the nation-state is no longer assumed to be solely in control when it comes to citizenship matters). Similarly, migration could be regarded as posing threats to national unity, for instance due to “diluting the national community” by introducing “ethnic outsiders”. The assumption is that the state’s capacity for closure (partial or otherwise) is essential for ensuring the continued distinctiveness of ethnic or cultural groups.³⁴⁵ Also, the increasing role of Europe as a new point of identification (a novel reference point for the national community) could be seen as a threatening development from the nationalist standpoint, especially those with a proclivity towards exclusive conceptions of the nation. For these reasons, this chapter looks at the EU’s potential to create a new and competing type of nationalism (Euronationalism) as well as EU constraints on the citizenship and migration policies of the nation-state.

1: “Euronationalism”: EU identity building

One aspect of Europeanization, which could be potentially relevant when attempting to understand the mindset of nationalist-populist actors, and their opposition to the EU project, is the EU’s capacity to concoct a form of Euronationalism that could be strong enough to compete with or even displace the traditional state-centered (and to a lesser extent regionally based) nationalism. Euronationalism (which may alternatively be labelled Pan-European nationalism) could be conceptualized as an inherently contradictory term that captures many divergent real or purported manifestations of the EU identity-generating activities. Generally the concept of Euronationalism tends to be associated with the writings of Hedetoft on the relationships between national and European identity or is defined vis-à-vis Atlanticism, with the United States constituting “the other”, while Pan-European nationalism is a shorthand for

³⁴⁵ Kostakopoulou, Theodora. Citizenship, identity and immigration in the European Union – between past and

a wider variety of ideologies and political processes that focus on the linkages between the national and the European. Both terms are somewhat imperfect and could invite confusion if utilized in an overly generic sense.

At its most innocuous, Euronationalism could be seen as describing the implicit containment of conventional nationalism – in Hedetoft’s terms, “all the [EU] nations have entered into commitments that influence the orthodox identity structure of national identity, by inviting their citizens to invest their calculations for the future not only in relation to their own political sovereign, but also to [supranational] institutions formally superior to it.”³⁴⁶ In a sense, the partial surrender of sovereignty, due to the nation-states’ membership of the EU, shepherds political figures into engaging in discussions relating to European identity and intra-European solidarities, even if politicians would generally prefer to only embrace national identity discourses.³⁴⁷

More threateningly from a nationalist perspective, Euronationalism could be regarded as the rival sentiment (supra-nationalism) arising out of or leading to the potential creation of a European super-state at some stage in the future.³⁴⁸ By the early 1970s, the cataclysms of WWII were no longer regarded as being freshly etched in the minds of the populace. Thus, political actors felt the need to deliberately begin to craft a symbolic dimension of the EEC,³⁴⁹ a process of identity-building which became much more marked with the establishment of the European Union and the creation of European Union citizenship. The EC had already adopted the symbols of nationhood, the flag and anthem, in 1985. The motto ‘United in Diversity’ came into use in 2000 and the Euro was launched as a common currency in the Eurozone in 2002. There are also many EU-sponsored activities that try to

future (2001), p. 134.

³⁴⁶ Hedetoft, Ulf. *Euro-nationalism: or how the EC affects the nation-state as a repository of identity* (1991), p. 17.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Hedetoft, Ulf. *Euro-nationalism: or how the EC affects the nation-state as a repository of identity* (1991), p. 17.

promote a sense of common identity. Glendening and Shore draw attention to the “persistent attempts to manufacture European identity and consciousness by modern communications technologies, intermediary “front organizations”, and other familiar nation-building strategies, some specifically aimed at the “cultural reprogramming” of European youth” on the part of the EU.³⁵⁰

From the standpoint of traditional nationalists, pan-nationalism is not always regarded as a counter-principle to nationalist thought.³⁵¹ Some parties like the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in Germany tend to value the EU and thus campaign vigorously against the inclusion of “borderline European” countries like Turkey, while encouraging the deepening of emotional attachments between EU states.³⁵² Essentially, they cater to the logic, perhaps unintentionally, that the EU could serve as a larger nation-state, providing a unifying cultural framework among European people.³⁵³ In this regard, Delanty envisions the possibility of “a European *ethnos* emerging around an identity based on exclusion, a supra-nationality, where the reference point is non-European”.³⁵⁴ Back, Crabbe and Solomos see the development of a strong EU identity as disempowering in the case of “hyphenated Europeans” (i.e. those belonging to non-white minorities). The theorists maintain that such minority groups could find it quite difficult to lay claim to the common European identity, frequently alluded to by Eurocrats, in part due to the emphasis on the ancient historical links between Europeans as a core feature of this identity. In a worst case scenario, they could view European identity as a term that is redolent of colonial systems of racial classification, only having the potential to

³⁴⁹ Laffan, Brigid. *The European Union and Its Institutions as “Identity Builders”* (2004), p. 82.

³⁵⁰ Shore, Cris. *Whither European Citizenship? Eros and Civilization Revisited* (2004), p. 38.

³⁵¹ Grillo, Ralph. *European Identity in a Transnational Era* (2007), p. 78.

³⁵² Braun, Mats. *Reasons for a withdrawal from the EU: EU-critical parties in Denmark and Sweden* (2010), p. 3.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁴ Jamieson, Lynn. *Theorising Identity, Nationality, and Citizenship: Implications for European Citizenship Identity* (2002), p. 6 (citing Gerard Delanty. *Social Theory and European Transformation: Is there a European Society?*, 1998, section 4.10).

exacerbate the sentiments that they lack a “European cultural passport”.³⁵⁵ It can be argued that the EU adheres to an exclusionary mode of identity, as evidenced by the rather restrictive European immigration regime.³⁵⁶

However, some nationalists even within Europe could also criticize Euronationalism for being exclusionary. They are likely to resent suggestions such as Karl Lamers’ idea of a “core Europe” that would be more deeply integrated (integrating at a different speed) than “non-core” members.³⁵⁷ Similarly, as early as the year 2000 Joschka Fischer, then Foreign Minister and Vice Chancellor of Germany, outlined “an institutional distinction between a kernel part of the EU or a gravitational centre leading the way to a European federation and a broader set of EU members that are also to be part of the club, but remain more loosely connected to the other EU members”.³⁵⁸ Such understandings, even if not reflecting majority views or necessarily shaping current policies, may nonetheless continue to breed suspicion among newcomers like the CEE states. One practical manifestation of these internal divisions among EU members was the apparent disconnect between the legal status of the “EU citizen” and the incomplete rights of citizens of newly acceded Eastern European countries to make use of the labor mobility provisions under Article 39 EC (due to the reluctance of most “old” member states to open their labor markets immediately after the 2004 enlargement).³⁵⁹

Another reading of Euronationalism also suggests that there is at times a markedly geopolitical slant to the concept, with its antipode being perceived to be Atlanticism;

³⁵⁵ Grillo, Ralph. *European Identity in a Transnational Era* (2007), p. 79 (citing L. Back, T. Crabbe, and J. Solomos. *The changing face of football racism, identity, and multicultural in the English game*, 2003).

³⁵⁶ Kostakopoulou, Theodora. *Citizenship, identity and immigration in the European Union – between past and future* (2001), p. 7.

³⁵⁷ Gueldry, Michel R. *France and European integration – towards a transnational polity?* (2001), p. 3. (citing Wolfgang Schäuble and Karl Lamers, *Überlegungen zur europäischen Politik/Thoughts on European Politics*, 1994).

³⁵⁸ Mummendey, Amélie and Sven Walz. *National Differences and European Plurality: Discrimination or Tolerance between European Countries* (2004), p. 60.

³⁵⁹ Shaw, Jo. *The Transformation of Citizenship in the European Union – Electoral Rights and the Restructuring of Political Space* (2007), pp. 351-352.

Euronationalism is thus conceptualized as the development of an independent EU economic or geopolitical bloc that could compete and challenge USA dominance in certain key areas.³⁶⁰ Potentially this could be seen as undesirable by nationalists who identified their country's interests as being best protected by close alliance with the USA.

In Duchesne and Frognier's views, European identity is not a nationalist creation but a new type of strictly political allegiance, which has entered the stage in the context of the decline of national identities.³⁶¹ In addition, it is frequently claimed that the EU is "uncompromisingly anti-nationalist" (if one is to look at the motivations of Jean Monnet and other founding fathers) and thus any attempts to help create an entity that could rival the nation-state in terms of its potential to draw affective support, would be unfaithful to the EU project's explicitly recognized vocation - curbing the nationalist excesses of the past.³⁶² With regard to the on the ground behavior of EU actors, Shore confirms that nationalism is a term which is largely avoided among European commissioners (to take one example), who have a strong tendency to be forward-looking and prefer not to prioritize reflections on the past.³⁶³

From a practical standpoint, leaving any idealistic qualms aside, it is doubtful whether the EU could ever be capable of evoking emotive support to the same extent as the nation-state. Scholars of nationalism like Anthony Smith tend to regard supranational entities like the EU as being "impotent" (especially relative to the nation-state), as they do not have the same mobilization tools, such as common myths of origin and burning historical memories, as nation-states.³⁶⁴ Smith posits that "national identity is perhaps the most fundamental and

³⁶⁰ Cheong, Tan Keng. *The EU: an ever looser Union?* (2005), pp. 3-4.

³⁶¹ Demossier, Marion. *The Political Structuring of Cultural Identities in Europe* (2007), p. 58 (citing S. Duchesne and A-P. Frognier. *Is There a European Identity*, 1995, p. 202).

³⁶² Bátorá, Jozef. *Exclusion and Transversalism: Culture in the EU's External Relations* (2011), p. 88.

³⁶³ Demossier, Marion. *The Political Structuring of Cultural Identities in Europe* (2007), p. 57 (citing Cris Shore. "Inventing Homo Europaeus, The Cultural Politics of European Integration", 2001).

³⁶⁴ Smith, Anthony D. *Ethno-symbolism and nationalism – a cultural approach* (2009), p. 75.

inclusive” of all collective identities in the modern era.³⁶⁵ Brubaker also regards nation (as well as ethnicity and race) as social and cultural structures that possess a status in popular consciousness which is almost unrivalled.³⁶⁶ Thus, the contention is that there could be no future for an EU identity unless the EU became a carbon copy of the nation-state, which is at this stage not really a conceivable development.³⁶⁷ For such a scenario to become a reality, a Pan-Europeanist movement would have to successfully unify European nation-states into a cultural and political community by drawing on agreed upon “European patterns of culture.”³⁶⁸ Tassin follows a similar line of argument and compares the European Union to a multi-ethnic state that does not possess a “cohesive common original identity”.³⁶⁹ To sum up, supranational identity formation (in terms of an overarching European culture) would necessitate some sort of social engineering and is far from a natural process, which essentially means that such an endeavour is not worth embarking upon, as it is likely to be doomed from the outset.³⁷⁰

In addition, Edye (1997) posits that because of its lack of a common language, the EU is missing one of the main components of common culture, which in turn is one of the building blocks of ethnic nationalism.³⁷¹ The absence of great strides when it comes to European cultural policy initiatives has also sometimes been cited as a testament to the

³⁶⁵ Bruter, Michael. *Civic and Cultural Components of a European Identity: a Pilot Model of Measurement of Citizens' Levels of European Identity* (2004), p. 201 (citing Anthony D. Smith. *National Identity and the Idea of European Unity*, 1992, p. 62).

³⁶⁶ Brubaker, Rogers, Mara Loveman and Peter Stamatov. *Ethnicity as cognition* (2004), p. 53.

³⁶⁷ Demossier, Marion. *The Political Structuring of Cultural Identities in Europe* (2007), p. 59.

³⁶⁸ Kostakopoulou, Theodora. *Citizenship, identity and immigration in the European Union – between past and future* (2001), p. 28.

³⁶⁹ Meehan, Elizabeth. *Citizenship and the European Community* (1993), p. 153.

³⁷⁰ Orchard, Vivienne. *Culture as Opposed to What? Cultural Belonging in the Context of National and European Identity* (2002), p. 430.

³⁷¹ Field, Heather. *EU Cultural Policy and the creation of a common European identity* (1998), p. 251 (citing David Edye. *Citizenship in the European Union: the Post-Maastricht Scenario*, 1997, p. 73).

“weakness” of the EU in terms of its capacity to provide cultural frames of reference.³⁷²

Furthermore, the “lightness of symbolic structure” in the case of the EU is another guarantor against the emergence of a potent EU identity.³⁷³ As the EU category lacks a strong set of characteristics, it is gauged to be unlikely to challenge existing national identity elements.³⁷⁴ European citizenship is still weak when it comes to one particular type of normative conditioning – it does not provide avenues for “symbolically performing fundamental duties” (like serving a European army).³⁷⁵ On the level of the general public, there is evidence suggesting that citizens of European countries find it difficult to crystallize the qualities that characterize a member state of the EU.³⁷⁶ Drawing on Donald Campbell’s framework, this could be attributable to the EU’s presumed low degree of “entitativity” (the perceived reality of a group’s existence) due to the absence of clear geographical boundaries (it is open to further enlargements) and paucity of “common fates” between the members.³⁷⁷ As for the EU institutions, discourses in the European Commission tend to be characterized by “Eurospeak” (a common language arising out of the day-to-day embeddedness into a multicultural environment), but at the same time commissioners maintain strong links with their co-nationals and the likelihood to resort to national stereotypes in cases of perceived differences when it comes to working habits is quite high.³⁷⁸

All in all, the fears that Euronationalism will substitute for traditional nationalism are unlikely to be at the forefront of nationalist concerns, but it is nonetheless worth exploring to what extent related trepidations form part of the nationalist-populist rhetoric.

³⁷² Gordon, Christopher. *Great expectations – the European Union and cultural policy: fact or fiction?* (2010), pp. 105-108.

³⁷³ Grillo, Ralph. *European Identity in a Transnational Era* (2007), pp. 77-78.

³⁷⁴ Breakwell, Glynis M. *Identity Change in the Context of the Growing Influence of European Union Institutions* (2004), p. 35.

³⁷⁵ Sobisch, Andreas. *The European Union and European Citizenship* (1997), pp. 85-86.

³⁷⁶ Breakwell, Glynis M. *Identity Change in the Context of the Growing Influence of European Union Institutions* (2004), p. 35.

³⁷⁷ Castano, Emanuele. *European Identity: A Social-Psychological Perspective* (2004), pp. 43-44 (citing Donald Campbell. *Common Fate, Similarity, and other indices of the status of aggregates of person as social entities*, 1958).

2: Changing definitions of citizenship

The issues surrounding the granting of citizenship - seen as an official validation of one's membership within a nation-state - have often been at the forefront of debates launched by nationalist actors. Dominique Schnapper regards citizenship law as an example of a "direct translation of a country's conception of itself as a nation".³⁷⁹ Citizenship controversies are thus likely to generate significant emotional baggage not solely for nationalists, but also for those on the left side of the political spectrum, as demonstrated by the recently ignited controversy following the granting of Russian citizenship to French actor Gérard Depardieu by Russian President Vladimir Putin. For instance, the French Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault summed up Depardieu's decision to give up his French citizenship as "pathetic and unpatriotic"³⁸⁰ and some of the subsequent societal level debates have revolved around the notion of "French exception" and the "particular cherishing of citizenship within France as a mark of one's belonging to the national family".³⁸¹

Accordingly, it is essential to briefly explore some of the ways in which the EU influences national citizenship procedures. Citizenship procedures encompass three dimensions: the principles that govern the right to citizenship (*jus sanguinis*, *jus soli*, and *jus domicili*), the hurdles imposed (minimum length of residence, citizenship tests, etc.) if naturalization is permitted as well as the degree of receptiveness to dual citizenship. A 'permissive/liberal citizenship regime' could involve an abandonment of strict attachment to *jus sanguinis*, with ethnocultural or racial descent no longer being the only prerequisite for becoming a citizen of a country or according one special primacy in terms of expediting the

³⁷⁸ Grillo, Ralph. *European Identity in a Transnational Era* (2007), pp. 77-78.

³⁷⁹ Hansen, Randall and Patrick Weil. *Introduction: Citizenship, Immigration and Nationality: Towards a Convergence in Europe?* (2001), p. 3 (citing Dominique Schnapper. *The Idea of Nation*, 1995, p. 180).

³⁸⁰ *The Guardian*. Gérard Depardieu says he will give up French passport over tax rises, 16 December 2012.

procedures surrounding the acquisition of citizenship. Consequently, such a regime is also likely to be characterized by looser regulations pertaining to naturalization in terms of the temporal framework or the level of cultural or historical knowledge expected of new immigrants. Lastly, a liberal citizenship regime is likely to take hold in a country that has managed to disassociate itself from a strict adherence to ethnic nationalism; thus it should allow for dual nationality, because ethnic identity is not essentialized and it is deemed natural for an individual to have multiple ethnic and national loyalties.

Since the early 1990s (and in an indirect way even prior to that), the EU level has managed to shatter some of the nationally entrenched illiberal citizenship paradigms.

For instance, it is notable that according to the literature on comparative citizenship, what has been observed over the last few years is a convergence of the citizenship rules throughout the countries of the EU. For instance, Jöppke draws attention to several such trends, including the weakening of naturalization rules and the increased toleration of dual citizenship, as well as the elimination of overtly racist rules.³⁸²

In particular, some of the Amsterdam Treaty provisions and subsequent EU directives addressing discrimination against ethnicity and religion have been regarded as path-breaking in opening up new frameworks for inclusive citizenship within member states.³⁸³

Consequently, the Law on Aliens, passed by the Greek Parliament in 2001, reduced the minimum period of legal residence as a precondition for naturalization by 5 years and eliminated the minimum period of residence for third country nationals born on Greek soil.³⁸⁴ The new legal framework, together with further reforms in 2010, has been credited with ushering in an element of *jus soli* in Greek citizenship norms, essentially paving the way for a

³⁸¹ Fraser, Matthew. Depardieu's puzzling love for Russia, 8 January 2013.

³⁸² Dumbrava, Costica. How Illiberal are Citizenship Rules in European Union countries? (2009), p. 2 (citing Christian Jöppke. Comparative Citizenship: a Restrictive Turn in Europe?, 2008, pp. 130-131).

³⁸³ Siim, Birte and Judith Squires. *Contesting Citizenship* (2008), p. 43.

³⁸⁴ Mavrodi, Georgia. Europeanising" national immigration policy: the case of Greece (2005), p. 10.

qualitative change with regard to the relations between foreigners and the Greek state.³⁸⁵ The active role played by the European Commission in the immigration domain in aftermath of the entry into force of the Amsterdam Treaty is likely to have had some influence on the Greek legislative measures.³⁸⁶ As for Germany, it exhibited a number of similarities with the Greek case, with the first decisive de-ethnicization policies in the realm of citizenship beginning in 1992 (see Chapter Three).³⁸⁷ In Groenendijk and Heijs' view, the Council of Europe meetings in the 1990s served to put Germany on the spot and played a role in paving the way for the country's gradual acceptance of dual nationality.³⁸⁸ By the same token, in the Dutch case, the awareness that the negative attitude towards dual nationality was being questioned in the Council of Europe (within the Committee of experts on nationality) influenced the nature of national debates in 1984 and provided a boost to the lobbying activities of migrant organizations.³⁸⁹

In a normative sense, Europeanization is also gauged to have challenged the meaning and practice of citizenship, with new demands for the protection of social and cultural practices raised by minority groups serving to widen its content.³⁹⁰ In Soysal's conception, postnational citizenship undercuts the primacy of state, because thanks to it migrants and third country nationals are entitled to certain rights and protections that are to be granted by a state other than their own.³⁹¹ As an outgrowth of this reliance on various states to ensure the protection of rights, European citizenship could become a lynchpin for abolishing the

³⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 11.

³⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 14.

³⁸⁷ Jöppke, Christian. *Citizenship between De-and Re-Ethnicization* (2003), p. 9.

³⁸⁸ Hansen, Randall and Patrick Weil. *Introduction: Citizenship, Immigration and Nationality: Towards a Convergence in Europe?* (2001), p. 13.

³⁸⁹ Groenendijk, Kees and Eric Heijs. *Immigration, Immigrants and Nationality Law in the Netherlands, 1945-1998* (2001), p. 163.

³⁹⁰ Siim, Birte and Judith Squires. *Contesting Citizenship* (2008), p. 3.

³⁹¹ Kostakopoulou, Theodora. *Citizenship, identity and immigration in the European Union – between past and future* (2001), p. 95 (citing Yasemin Nuhoğlu Soysal. *Changing Citizenship in Europe: Remarks on Postnational Membership and the National State*, 2001, p. 67).

hierarchy between different loyalties of national citizens.³⁹² By the same token, it has been noted that discussions on EU citizenship supplementing national citizenship have had a conditioning effect, as they made the idea of Europe becoming a multicultural society appear more credible and also helped foster a more accepting attitude towards less strict provisions for the acquisition of nationality.³⁹³ In this regard, Magnette has pointed out that there has been a feedback loop between the EU and national governments when it came to the evolution of these citizenship rules.³⁹⁴ As Marshall succinctly puts it in relation to the relevant effects of Europeanization: “The traditional link between rights [pertaining to citizenship] and territory has become much looser: for most civic and social rights, the filtering role of nationality has been neutralized.”³⁹⁵ Ostensibly, the development of a policy of civic integration was moved to the EU (intergovernmental) level at the initiative of Nicolas Sarkozy, (then) French Minister of the Interior. Consequently, in March 2006, the interior ministers of the six largest EU countries (the G6) agreed to pursue the idea of an “integration contract”, using the French model as a starting point.³⁹⁶ The European Convention on Nationality (ECN) has also played a major role with regard to providing a normative influence on EU member states in the domain of nationality matters.³⁹⁷

In addition, another important authority in the area with regard to helping put forth the notion of “embedded liberalism” within the citizenship domain is vested in the European Court of Justice (ECJ). For instance, in the realm of education, the ECJ has generally been gauged to have gone a long way towards granting students the right to study in other member

³⁹² Shaw, Jo. *The Transformation of Citizenship in the European Union – Electoral Rights and the Restructuring of Political Space* (2007), p. 40.

³⁹³ Groenendijk, Kees and Eric Heijts. *Immigration, Immigrants and Nationality Law in the Netherlands, 1945-1998* (2001), p. 164.

³⁹⁴ Magnette, Paul and Kalypso Nicolaidis. *The European Union’s Democratic Agenda* (2009), pp. 8-9.

³⁹⁵ Jenson, Jane. *The European Union’s Citizenship Regime. Creating Norms and Building Practices* (2007), pp. 66-68 (citing T. H. Marshall. *Citizenship and Social Class*, 1992).

³⁹⁶ Schain, Martin A. *The State Strikes Back: Immigration Policy in the European Union* (2009), p. 105.

³⁹⁷ De Groot, Gérard-Réne. *Towards a European Nationality Law* (2004), pp. 13-15.

states under the same conditions as those of their nationals (essentially enabling “foreigners” to enjoy certain privileges, even if they are lacking “citizenship credentials”).³⁹⁸

It is also worth noting that there is a strong positive correlation between the degree of permissiveness of the procedures governing the acquisition of citizenship within a country (citizenship regime type) and the level of tolerance of the general population when it comes to minorities and “outsiders”.³⁹⁹ Permissive citizenship regulations are a recipe for increased minority activism (touched upon in section 4 of Chapter 2), as they provide greater opportunities for political involvement on the part of newly arrived immigrants and create a greater number of political role models for them. Thus, it is not far-fetched to assume that the citizenship changes within countries that were ushered by the EU could have a major conditioning effect (on both majorities and minorities) and reduce the polarization between majority and minority groups.

There is some merit to the contention that the EU through the development of a supranational citizenship has played an important role (if only confining itself to pulling the strings behind the stage) in refurbishing national citizenship laws, changing the legalist climate within states, as well as altering patterns of governance within countries especially when it comes to majority-minority power-sharing. Citizenship issues have the potential to inflame political debates and are frequently intricately tied to the power differentials between majority and minority groups.⁴⁰⁰ Illuminating the extent to which nationalist-populist party stakeholders were inclined to reflect on such issues through the prism of the EU, and the degree to which they described themselves as aggrieved in relation to purportedly EU-driven

³⁹⁸ Garben, Sascha. *The Belgian/Austrian Education Saga* (2008), pp. 4-5.

³⁹⁹ Weldon, Steven A. *The Institutional Context of Tolerance for Ethnic Minorities: A Comparative, Multilevel Analysis of Western Europe* (2006), pp. 345-346.

⁴⁰⁰ Pavlenko, Aneta. *Russian as a lingua franca* (2006), p. 89.

metamorphoses in the power relations between majority and minority actors, was one of the investigative aims during the course of the field work.

3: Migration developments

Unpacking the identity dimension of Euroscepticism when it comes to nationalist-populist parties also entails examining some linkages between migration and EU governance. Migration is a fundamental issue, as it is at the cross-section of both Europeanization (with the EU frequently gauged as having massively impacted on the nation-state's policies regarding the "inclusion and exclusion of outsiders" and seen as a catalyst of globalization) and nationalism. Migration represents an intrinsic challenge to the seamlessness and permanence of the already constructed "national community" from the perspective of rightist actors. "Migration brings to the definition of nationalism and national allegiance the possibility of ambivalence: multiple allegiances may co-exist, drawing attention to the porosity of borders and the permeability of cultures."⁴⁰¹

As a starting point, if one is to assume that parties serve as filters and/or conduits of public opinion, it has to be pointed out that public views on immigration in the EU sphere tend to be restrictionist. For instance, Kessler and Freeman affirm that the general tendencies within the EU, and the developed world as a whole, could be characterized as reflecting a "majoritarian anti-immigration sentiment".⁴⁰²

⁴⁰¹ Wagstaff, Peter. *Remapping Regionalism in Europe* (2007), p. 164.

⁴⁰² Breunig, Christian and Adam Lüdtke. What motivates the gatekeepers? Explaining governing party preferences on immigration (2008), p. 127 (citing Alan E. Kessler and Gary P. Freeman. *Public Opinion in the EU on Immigration from Outside the Community*, 2005, pp. 826-827).

Generally, the degree to which there is a fit between these public attitudes and the positions adopted by party actors - the extent to which voter preferences are reflected in political outcomes like the type of legislation that is passed - is in part determined by the institutional structures within the specific countries. In terms of the factors promoting responsiveness of political actors, states that have proportional representation systems, relatively low electoral thresholds, and an absence of strict judicial review (with the implicit assumption that courts are the defenders of minority rights against majoritarian excesses), are seen as conducive to the existence of a high degree of transferability of public sentiments to the party domain, which would entail that there would be no major hindrances to the undisturbed existence of staunchly anti-immigrant factions.⁴⁰³ In essence, parties with more radical agendas, representing fringe interests, are better positioned to gain access to the upper echelons and there are fewer institutional constraints when it comes to coalition-building.⁴⁰⁴

The institutional environment aside, parties also tend to be strategically motivated when it comes to tackling the immigration question – thus, immigration issues could be deliberately downplayed if there is a certain incentive to maintain the status quo, for instance in the case of parties in government that are constrained by international obligations pertaining to immigrant rights, or overemphasized - for example, if an opposition faction is inclined to put a government on the spot in order to appeal to a particular voting constituency.⁴⁰⁵

In addition, innate features like the ideological underpinnings of parties also influence their attitudes towards immigration questions. Some scholars like Milner and Judkins stress the potency of partisan cleavages, with left-leaning parties assumed to be naturally pro-immigrant, while their right-leaning counterparts are judged to be intrinsically opposed to immigration, irrespective of specific national histories or the existence of certain structural

⁴⁰³ Ibid, p. 127.

⁴⁰⁴ Canovan, Margaret. *Trust the people! Populism and the two faces of democracy* (1999), p. 6.

⁴⁰⁵ Breunig, Christian and Adam Lüdtke. *What motivates the gatekeepers? Explaining governing party preferences on immigration* (2008), p. 126.

constraints. The reasons for the divergences when it comes to the positions likely to be taken on the immigration issue are tied to the premise that there are different sources of political capital.⁴⁰⁶ Alternatively, some theorists are skeptical of the notion that immigrant groups are regarded as significant constituencies of the parties on the left. In essence, it is stipulated that immigrants are politically passive or simply unable to vote due to restrictions connected to their inability to obtain citizenship.⁴⁰⁷ In addition, the contention that left-leaning parties tend to be generous on migration issues is perceived as dubious, as such factions are regarded as being conscious of the risks of short-term backlashes or of the perils associated with alienating “core” constituencies like the working class, which are assumed to generally perceive immigration waves as threats to livelihoods.⁴⁰⁸

In the early years of the European project, migration was seen as an issue that was largely epiphenomenal to other developments. In the aftermath of WWII, migration tended to be viewed in a positive light, due to being perceived as being an important vehicle for the economic reconstruction of Europe.⁴⁰⁹ The coming into force of the Single European Act (SEA), which signaled the completion of the internal market, ushered in an era of securitization of migration within the EU domain. This implied an increasing attention to the security of external frontiers of the EU to counteract the increasing permissiveness within the EU area itself, as exemplified by the provisions on the free movement of people. The Terrorism, Radicalism and Violence (TREVI) groups, the Schengen Treaties, as well as the European Union Police Office (Europol) have been identified as fostering linkages between migration and the security nexus.⁴¹⁰ In Bigo’s terms, when it came to agencies like Europol, migration was almost invariably analyzed as part of a continuum, with crime and terrorism

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid, pp. 128-129 (citing Helen V. Milner and Benjamin Judkins. *Partisanship, Trade Policy, and Globalization: Is There a Left–Right Divide on Trade Policy?*, pp. 101-102, 2004).

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁸ Hillebrand, Ernst. *Migration and Integration: the Errors of the European Left* (2007), pp. 35-38.

⁴⁰⁹ Karyotis, Georgios. *European Migration Policy in the aftermath of September 11: the security-migration nexus* (2007), pp. 3-4.

representing other spikes of the same machine.⁴¹¹ With regard to some of the concrete measures, reflecting the dominance of the securitization framework, one could cite the introduction of carrier liability, which was pioneered by the 1990 Schengen Agreements and the establishment of conditions for migration control as a prerequisite to the deepening of relations between countries at the peripheries and the EU, as stipulated by the Seville Conclusions.⁴¹²

The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks are gauged to have entrenched the tendency to link migration to security concerns.⁴¹³

Nationalist-populist actors are not satisfied by EU attempts to control migration and voice concerns regarding the empowerment of unaccountable officials and migration experts at the EU level at the expense of national-level controls. One example of the EU's lack of effectiveness in controlling migration is the flourishing of circumvention strategies for the purposes of recruitment of low-skilled laborers within the EU, with market intermediaries and legal advisory firms being the puppeteers, often benefiting from the transnationalization of migration.⁴¹⁴

The migration issue could be seen as especially contentious, as it could serve to illuminate the existence of rifts between different EU members, frequently attributable to differing national interests due to variations in endogenous factors like geographic location. The free-rider problem has been identified as plaguing some of the initiatives aiming to tackle illegal migration. In Samuelson's conception, "it is in the selfish interest of each person to give false signals, to pretend to have less interest in a given collective activity than he really

⁴¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 5-6.

⁴¹¹ Ibid, p. 5 (citing Didier Bigo. *Frontiers and Security in the European Union: the Illusion of Migration Control*, 1998, pp. 160-161).

⁴¹² Lavenex, Sandra. *Shifting up and out: the foreign policy of European immigration control* (2006), p. 334.

⁴¹³ Karyotis, Georgios. *European Migration Policy in the aftermath of September 11: the security-migration nexus* (2007), p. 8.

has”.⁴¹⁵ Notably, as Southern EU states have been forced to rigorously monitor their borders out of pure necessity, some of the migration flows to the North have dwindled as a result of their efforts. In essence, countries beyond the Southern European region have benefited by the latter’s provision of a public good or a positive externality (through migration control).⁴¹⁶ The European Commission launched the concept of integrated border management in 2002, which intended to create a financial burden-sharing mechanism between all member states, premised on the idea of solidarity between countries. However, the degree of willingness to cooperate exhibited by North European countries has been gauged to have been rather meager so far, especially in the pioneering years, essentially derailing the effectiveness of common initiatives.⁴¹⁷ Similarly, the common EU agency *Frontières extérieures* (Frontex), which came into existence in 2005 with the aim of bringing together EU initiatives relevant to the enforcement of external border controls, has not succeeded in generating enthusiasm among most EU member-states, particularly when it comes to maritime patrol operations.⁴¹⁸ In autumn 2013, the issue of ‘free-riding’ by North European states and Frontex underfunding moved to the forefront of public concern in Europe after the drowning of hundreds of African migrants in the Mediterranean.

Interestingly, free-rider issues (in the domain of counterterrorism) have also cut across the East-West divide (rather than the South-North one) within the EU, especially in the aftermath of the 2004 enlargement. In the post 9/11 climate, it became increasingly evident that there were markedly differing threat perceptions and significances attached to counter-terrorist efforts among “old” and “new” EU member states.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁴ Ibid, p. 302.

⁴¹⁵ Haake, Claus-Jochen, Tim Krieger, and Steffen Minter. On the institutional design of burden sharing when financing external border enforcements in the EU (2010), p. 2 (citing Paul A. Samuelson. The Pure Theory of Public Expenditure, pp. 388-389, 1954).

⁴¹⁶ Ibid, p. 1.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid, p. 2.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

⁴¹⁹ Monar, Jörg. The EU’s Approach post-September 11: Global Terrorism as a Multidimensional Law Enforcement Challenge (2007), p. 274.

While the “fortress Europe” rhetoric has traditionally been assumed to refer to the EU countries’ attempts to guard against non-European immigration and is frequently thought to possess anti-“Third Worldism” undertones, the fall-out from the 2004 EU enlargement, especially the actually experienced (or projected) immigration waves, has become a major concern for Western European Eurosceptics.

Formal economic studies suggest that the economic impacts of the enlargement on the “old” EU members could be seen as ambiguous, but certainly without markedly negative fall-outs. For instance, Boeri and Brücker maintain that the general effects of the 2004 enlargement on labor markets have not been significant.⁴²⁰ In the case of the UK and Ireland, long-term dividends attributable to the increased migration from CEE have been identified – for instance, the filling of certain labor gaps in the low-skilled sectors of the economy.⁴²¹ In the Irish situation, migration has tended to reflect demand and has not had serious displacement effects.⁴²² Still, by 2011, according to figures supplied by the Department for Work and Pensions, as many as 1.5 million Eastern European workers had gained some sort of employment in the UK, a much higher number than that suggested by the conservative estimates.⁴²³ While the impact of the new migrants on the unemployment rate and wages within the UK has generally been regarded as negligible, Blanchflower and Lawton (2008) suggest that the relative wages of those falling within the “least skilled” category may have been adversely affected.⁴²⁴ In this regard, MacKenzie and Forde (2009) report that CEE citizens in low-wage sectors of the economy have been quick to adjust their expectations and

⁴²⁰ Wieclawski, Jacek. *The Eastern Enlargement of the European Union: Fears, Challenges, and Reality* (2010), pp. 7-8 (citing Tito Boeri and Herbert Brücker. *Migration, co-ordination failures and EU enlargement*, 2005, p. 39).

⁴²¹ Portes, Jonathan and Simon French. *The impact of free movement of workers from Central and Eastern Europe on the UK Labor Market: early evidence* (2005), pp. 2-3.

⁴²² Foti, Klara. *Trends and Reasons for East-European Labor Migration to Ireland and the UK in the First Years of Enlargement* (2009), p. 36.

⁴²³ Fox, Jon E., Laura Morosanu and Eszter Szilassy. *The Racialization of the New European Migration to the UK* (2012), p. 681.

“Westernize” in the sense of making demands for higher wages and improved conditions in the workplace.⁴²⁵ On the psychological level, the fear of unemployment is also seen to have increased as a response to the immigration flows from the new members.⁴²⁶

In the comparative literature Eastern European migration patterns have been depicted as quite different from those typical of the post-colonial migrants and the asylum-seekers. Eastern Europeans have been characterized as regional “free movers” rather than “immigrants” due to their tendency to shun long-term permanent settlement within a specific Western European country and their willingness to engage in circular migration in accordance with market forces.⁴²⁷ However, it would be fallacious to regard the distinction as anything close to an absolute one, because a sizeable number of CEE citizens do not participate in circular migration and have made the UK or other Western European countries their permanent home.⁴²⁸

In a symbolic and practical sense, EU citizenship has been rated as highly beneficial for CEE member citizens (with some minor exceptions pertaining to the granting of full social rights),⁴²⁹ as a privatized CEE migration regime (premised on market forces and the immigrants’ own agency) is gauged to have largely replaced a state-controlled one.⁴³⁰ Thus, Piotr Kaczyński maintains that the Western European states were suddenly forced to come to grips with the new possibilities pertaining to the freedom of movement afforded to their

⁴²⁴ Kahaneč, Martin, Anželika Zaiceva, and Klaus F. Zimmermann. *Lessons from Migration after EU Enlargement* (2009), p. 27 (citing David G. Blanchflower and Helen Lawton. *The Impact of the EU on the UK Labor Market*, 2008).

⁴²⁵ Ciupijus, Zinovijus. *Mobile central eastern Europeans in Britain: successful European Union citizens and disadvantaged labour migrants?* (2011), p. 543 (citing Robert MacKenzie and Chris Forde. *The rhetoric of the ‘good worker’ versus the realities of employers’ use and the experiences of migrant workers*, 2009, p. 145).

⁴²⁶ Kahaneč, Martin, Anželika Zaiceva, and Klaus F. Zimmermann. *Lessons from Migration after EU Enlargement* (2009).

⁴²⁷ Favell, Adrian. *The New Face of East-West Migration in Europe* (2008), p. 3.

⁴²⁸ Ciupijus, Zinovijus. *Mobile central eastern Europeans in Britain: successful European Union citizens and disadvantaged labour migrants?* (2011), p. 546.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 543.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*

Eastern cousins (who were well-prepared to make use of them) and this contributed to some of the more apocalyptic pronouncements.⁴³¹

In this regard, Western Euroscepticism traceable to the 2004 enlargement has abounded. For instance, the 2005 French rejection of the EU Constitutional Treaty was largely rooted in French citizens' opposition to the most recent enlargement.⁴³² The "race to the bottom" motif has also been prominent in Eurosceptic discourses within Germany, Austria, Denmark, as well as in other states, with concerns pertaining to a newly emerging form of permissiveness when it comes to taxation (flat income taxes are typical for Eastern European states) and general labor standards.⁴³³ Surveys in these countries have consistently put fears of unemployment due to Eastern migration among the top concerns. Jumping on popular level discourses focusing on the threat to employment posed by CEE migrants,⁴³⁴ populist parties like UKIP and the PVV, especially within the framework of the EU economic crisis, have also made issues pertaining to the impacts of Eastern European migration an important part of their manifestos. The highly publicized Roma expulsions in France have been analyzed in the context of immigration fatigue in Western European countries. The "Roma frame" has been characterized as being "effective as a fulcrum for depriving migrants of their Europeanness".⁴³⁵

⁴³¹ Kaczyński, Piotr Maciej. *The Fifth Enlargement of the EU: Five Years On: the Case of Poland and the Czech Republic* (2008), p. 9.

⁴³² Barysch, Katinka. *East versus West? The European Economic and Social Model after Enlargement* (2005), p. 6.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

⁴³⁴ Ciupijus, Zinovijus. *Mobile central eastern Europeans in Britain: successful European Union citizens and disadvantaged labour migrants?* (2011), p. 544.

⁴³⁵ Fox, Jon E., Laura Morosanu and Eszter Szilassy. *The Racialization of the New European Migration to the UK* (2012), p. 689.

On the other side of the fence, the process of enlargement, as well as the accompanying changes in migration dynamics, has also opened new doors to Eurosceptic sentiments in the “new” EU countries.

Consistent with the previously outlined tendency at the EU level for countries to strive towards the transformation of the EU into a gated community, new EU member states have borne the brunt of EU conditions imposed in the realm of migration. In this regard, Vermeersch draws attention to the fact that it took a while for the adaptation costs suffered by the candidate countries to be reciprocated by the gaining of access to the markets of the “old” Western states. The latter were allowed a seven-year transition period before fully opening their markets. Ireland, the UK, and Sweden were the only member-states to open their labour markets in 2004 and other countries gradually followed suit, with Austria and Germany preserving restrictions until April 2011. At the same time, new member-states were expected to create barriers between themselves and their CEE neighbours. For instance, in 2000, Slovakia introduced a visa requirement for Ukrainians as part of the implementation of the Schengen *acquis*. This was gauged to have resulted in a drop in the border crossings from the Ukraine.⁴³⁶

When it comes to critiques of migration, nationalist-populist actors are rarely explicit in terms of allocating blame to the EU itself, with national governments and governing coalitions often bearing the brunt of the criticism. While the EU has arguably not been very successful (or actually intended to) usurp the functions of the states in this domain, migration issues are nonetheless an important part of the arsenal of Eurosceptic actors.

As established in some of the previous sections, immigration is frequently an issue that falls within the scope of “high” politics and is of prime importance from the perspective of nationalist-minded actors in EU countries. In the realm of migration, and in other areas that

⁴³⁶ Vermeersch, Peter. EU Enlargement and Immigration Policy in Poland and Slovakia (2005), p. 83.

are touched upon by EU law, the impacts of institutions like the ECJ in terms of their capacity to contribute to the entrenchment of certain norms within national frameworks, frequently with a preponderance of a relatively “liberal” slant, are often cited as significant in terms of steering the way towards uniform legal patterns.

With regard to the two Western European countries that will be analyzed in detail in the upcoming chapters (Germany and the Netherlands), the nature of their migration patterns has been affected to a significant extent by their membership in the EU. For instance, in the case of the Netherlands, since 2005, the number of immigrants has consistently increased, with inflows from the newly acceded CEE countries a major contributing factor to that.⁴³⁷ In 2011, 22 % of all immigrants originated from Eastern European countries, with Poles constituting the most numerous group.⁴³⁸ Between 2007 and 2011, immigration from other EU countries (mainly from the CEE part of the continent) to the Netherlands increased by 37 %.⁴³⁹ Germany is also one of the more popular destinations for both non-EU and intra-EU immigrants, receiving 23 % of third country nationals arriving in the EU and 21 % of other EU countries’ migrants in 2010.⁴⁴⁰ Alongside Spain, France, Italy, and the United Kingdom, it has the largest foreign-born population, though this is exceeded by the Netherlands in a relative sense.⁴⁴¹

In terms of the ability of these two countries to shape EU policies in the realm of migration, both the Netherlands and Germany have been identified as trend-setters within the EU with regard to the adoption of more restrictive reforms in issue areas like family

⁴³⁷ Country Notes: Recent Changes in Migration Movements and Policies - Netherlands (2013), p. 278.

⁴³⁸ Ibid.

⁴³⁹ Benton, Meghan and Milica Petrović. *How Free is Free Movement? Dynamics and Drivers of Mobility within the European Union* (2013), p. 12.

⁴⁴⁰ Grimm, Michaela. *Demographic challenges: Immigration and integration – an EU perspective* (2012), p. 12.

⁴⁴¹ Cavasola, Silvia. *The Informal Europeanization of EU Member State Immigration Policies* (2012), p. 3.

migration.⁴⁴² It also has to be stipulated that the Netherlands' turn to a more closed immigration policy in the mid 2000s has been in part inspired by new "exclusionary trends" at the EU level in relation to immigration during that same period⁴⁴³ and perhaps also by "informal Europeanization" (exchange of member state policy practices).⁴⁴⁴ Chapter Three will cover these two countries' specific policies and experiences with immigration in more detail.

⁴⁴² Block, Laura and Saskia Bonjour. *Fortress Europe or Europe of Rights? The Europeanisation of family migration policies in France, Germany and the Netherlands* (2013), p. 203.

⁴⁴³ Aileen, Tom. *How Stricter Dutch Immigration Policies are Contributing to Rising Islamic Fundamentalism in the Netherlands and Europe* (2006), pp. 459-460.

Chapter Conclusion and Framework of Analysis

The previous chapter conclusion brought the main exploratory framework to the forefront, but Chapter Two identified a number of additional questions of importance to the research. They were reexamined during the course of data collection and data analysis.

Chapter Two continued along the same path as Chapter One in bringing to light certain power asymmetries applicable to both CEE and Western European states that could be traceable to Europeanization dynamics. Chapter One touched upon the decreased influence of the rank and file of segments of national parties not dealing closely with EU issues, the enhanced difficulty of espousing Eurosceptic positions in the case of government parties, as well as the presumed normative and instrumental dividends reaped by ethnoregionalist parties and interest groups involved in the promotion of minority rights. It also provided an overview of Euroscepticism and related phenomena, staying faithful to the comparative dimension and acknowledging that the different baseline conditions in Eastern and Western European countries have affected the discourses adopted, the electoral performances and the degree of mainstreaming of Eurosceptic parties. In terms of asymmetries related to EU-induced right-wing party disempowerment, a small part of the chapter was also dedicated to the strategies utilized for containing radical parties and the “endorsement role” of the European Union. Chapter Two developed the topic by focusing on other possible asymmetries arising out of Europeanization that could lead nationalist-minded actors to express anti-EU grievances. It looked into EU-induced threats to the exclusive national identity conception both in theory and in practice by examining EU influences in the realms of national identity, citizenship policies, and migration dynamics. In relation to Pan-Europeanism, the chapter introduced a

⁴⁴⁴ Cavasola, Silvia. *The Informal Europeanization of EU Member State Immigration Policies* (2012), p. 8.

variety of theoretical conceptualizations and meanings, demonstrating how the EU has certain tools at its disposal that allow it to be an “identity-generator” and make it possible to redefine the relationship between the European and the national. With regard to citizenship, it was shown how the EU in both direct and indirect ways has been a significant player in bringing about a convergence between national citizenship regulations. In terms of migration and the role of the EU level, this chapter drew attention to some of the main criticisms surrounding the EU involvement in this realm related to the lack of effectiveness of its main instruments and implied that its approaches to handling migration-related issues could also stoke rivalries between specific countries or regions within the EU. The chapter primarily emphasized EU impacts that cut across both the CEE and NWE domains, but also provided some indication of CEE-specific or Western European-specific effects. For instance, it highlighted the economic impacts of intra-EU migration and the stark differences in the assessments regarding its threat potential between Easterners and Westerners.

The actual framework of analysis (based mainly on the specific material introduced in Chapter Two) consists of the following assumptions, which account for the preliminary hypotheses that are outlined as part of a diagram (please see below).

With regard to **Euronationalism** or **Pan-Europeanism**, the main expectation is that across both the CEE and Western European contexts, there will be a tendency to play down the transformative role of the EU and emphasize the durability of national identities. The reasoning behind this rests on the generally non-intrusive character of the EU cultural policies (culture-related measures occupy a relatively small part of the *acquis communautaire*),⁴⁴⁵ the continued willingness of the majority of nation-state citizens to identify primarily with their own countries, as well as a certain reluctance to concede that the

EU have secured for itself an aura of legitimacy that could rival that of the nation-state. As for the cross-regional dimension, it is anticipated that CEE nationalists would be more concerned about the Pan-European frame due to a number of factors. They include the salience of the “return to Europe” theme among societal actors in the aftermath of the transition from communist one party rule and the adoption of increasingly “Europeanist” profiles on the part of mainstream parties in order to be recognized as actors receptive to EU membership. On top of that, the higher degree of distrust with regard to domestic institutional structures and the generally lower level of economic affluence in Eastern Europe as compared to the developed West may cause concerns among nationalists that their compatriots would be more receptive to embracing a non-national identity. In addition, as the literature on nationalism in CEE and Western European countries demonstrated, national identity in the case of the latter is more likely to be defined in exclusionary terms (in accordance with the tenets of ethnic nationalism) or be associated with vulnerabilities (due to peculiar historical experiences related to foreign powers’ domination).

In short, while any subjective opinions of the effects of Pan-Europeanism on national identity are deemed unlikely to contain elevated threat perceptions, such sentiments are deemed more likely to be expressed by CEE populists.

As for **immigration dynamics**, the literature analyzed in this chapter so far steers one towards the opposite conclusion. Given the objective realities (Western European countries are above the EU average in terms of economic indicators like GDP and socio-political ones like HDI, which makes them immigration recipient states) and the willingness of populists to carve out a niche for themselves in exploiting anti-multiculturalism themes (despite the EU

⁴⁴⁵ Obuljen, Nina. Why we need European cultural policies: the impact of EU enlargement on cultural policies

effects on the promotion of multiculturalism being conceptually distinct compared to those in relation to immigration), Western European nationalist-populist members are expected to be more likely to identify EU influences in this domain as problematic in comparison to their Eastern counterparts. In addition, as established in Chapter Two, Eastern European countries have generally not adopted decisive stances regarding the South vs. North antagonisms pertaining to immigration controls, so they have remained somewhat epiphenomenal to some of the intra-EU rivalries connected to immigration. In addition, the higher proclivity of populists to emphasize short-term rather than long-term horizons is another reason why Western European populists are seen as more likely to express concerns regarding the EU role in this issue area (the most recent EU enlargements are fresh in the minds of policy-makers and countries like the Netherlands and Germany are feeling the effects of intra-EU migration).

In essence, from a nationalist-populist standpoint, immigration remains a fundamental issue when it comes to ensuring preservation of the national community; however, it is much more likely to be analyzed through an EU prism on the Western part of the continent than among Eastern European populists. This begs the question of whether Eastern European populists express concerns about the opposite phenomenon, i.e. emigration. The existing English language scholarship does not focus on this issue, but it may be anticipated that closer examination of populist agendas in CEE would uncover disquiet about emigration.

Pertaining to **citizenship**, the expectations are mixed – on the one hand, as stipulated in the literature, convergence among citizenship rules in a liberal direction has been much more expedient and noticeable in the case of the “old” Western European states. On the other hand, despite Eastern European countries not having been as of yet that significantly affected by

in transition countries (2005), pp. 11-12.

EU legislation and “informal policy transfer” in this sphere, their historical experience with citizenship procedures has been characterized by a high premium accorded to ethnic-based criteria, so any EU-induced uniformity with regard to citizenship provisions would be more likely to be viewed as a “paradigm shift” rather than a continuation of past national practices. Thus, it is anticipated that both CEE and Western European populists would display a roughly similar level of concern with regard to EU influences on citizenship regulations. However, in a general sense, this is not expected to be a significant trigger of Euroscepticism, mainly because of the highly technical nature of citizenship debates as well as the lesser degree of familiarity with regard to the role played by the EU in this domain.

In short, the EU-incuded impacts of citizenship are not conceptualized as likely to raise alarm bells among nationalist-populist members and roughly equal attention to this issue will be dedicated across both contexts.

In the case of **minority empowerment**, the analyses made in Chapter One suggest that CEE and Western European populists are quite likely to regard the EU as complicit in advancing minority agendas; even if it is not deemed to have been successful in a practical sense, it is likely to be conceptualized as an ally of minority interests from a normative standpoint. This is attributable to the enhanced role of minority lobbies within the EU structures (where they encounter a higher number of like-minded actors compared to at the national level), the EU’s commitment to minority rights through specific legislation, the EU’s generally positive effects on the election strategies of ethno-regionalist factions, as well as the EU’s role in isolating openly or covertly anti-minority parties from the mainstream. At the same time, the EU effect on minority empowerment is assumed to be much more pronounced and overt in the case of Eastern Europe (due to the special emphasis of minority rights as part of the accession process interacting with a national and political culture that is more receptive

to highly assimilationist policies in relation to ethnic minorities). Specific expert analyses (for example, see the works of Waller and Galbreath) also confirm that minorities in Eastern Europe tend to be more aware of newly acquired rights due to the influence of the European Union. In this regard, nationalist-populist actors in CEE countries are deemed likely to be aware of such factors and be more inclined to point the finger at the EU when it comes to discussing the “elevated status” of minority groups. From a practical standpoint, this is compounded by specific cultural and political stigmas in relation to discussing “majority” and “minority” groups in “us” vs. “them” (antagonistic) terms – they are assumed to be more pronounced in the case of Eastern European populists in whose countries authorities are less likely to be concerned about restricting the scope of “protected speech” and the media are somewhat more inclined to emphasize the distinctions between majority and minority groups.

In this regard, EU-induced “minority empowerment” is assessed as being quite likely to be viewed as problematic across both regional contexts, with the caveat that the EU influence is more likely to be overestimated among CEE nationalists.

The following diagram summarizes the main hypotheses developed as a result of the Chapter One and Chapter Two literature reviews. It strives to illuminate the linkages between the superorder categories (the twofold understandings of Europeanization – substantive and normative), the six hypotheses that were crafted and the questions that were posed during the course of the field work (subdivided into specific clusters). In this way, the shift from the theoretical to the empirical is also highlighted.

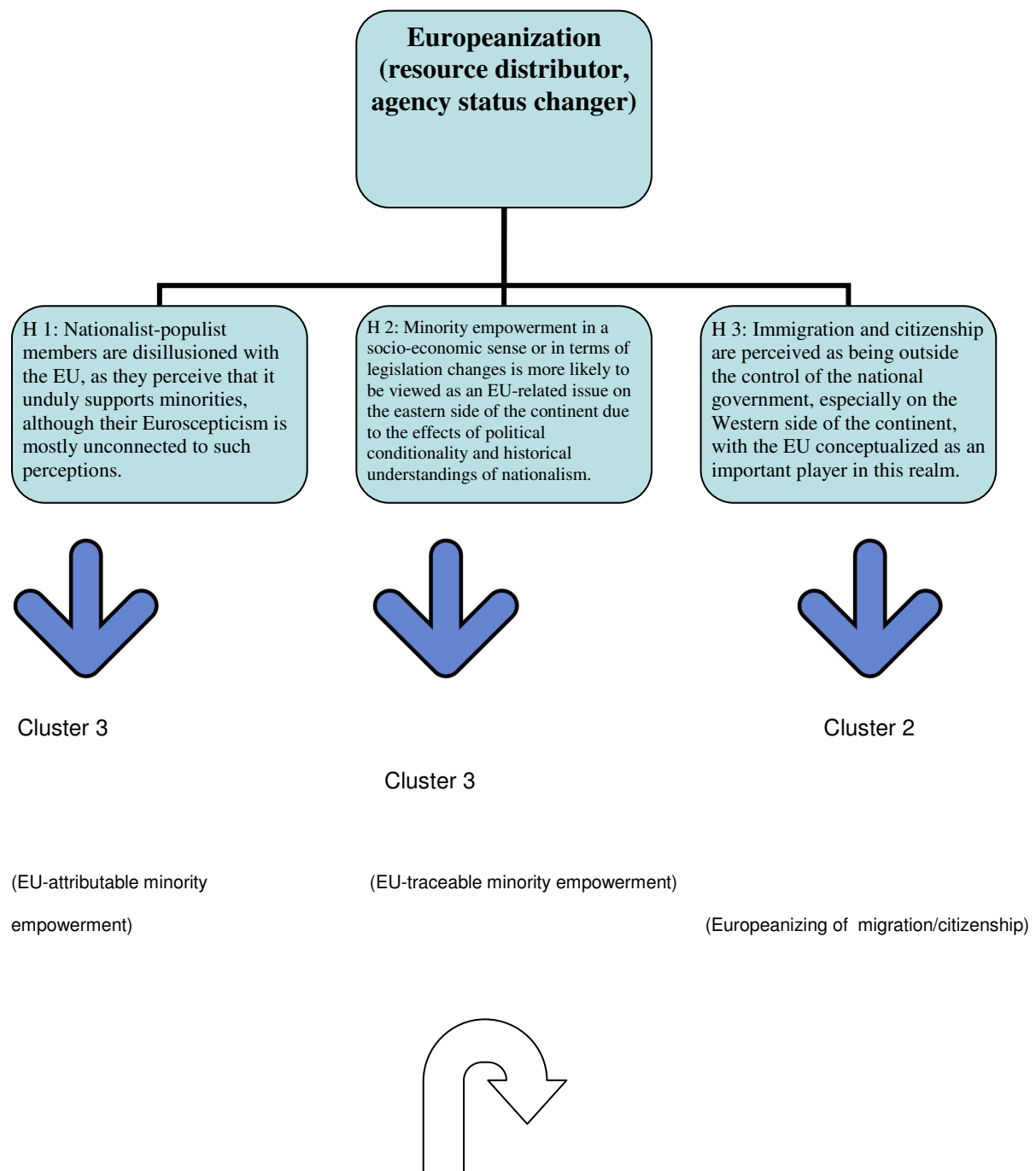
The first three hypotheses could be seen to fall within the overarching understanding of Europeanization as a distributor of resources and transformer when it comes to the status of

certain actors and entities (like nationalist-populist parties and minority groups). For instance, Hypothesis 2 suggests that nationalist-populist members may express grievances because of EU-induced specific changes in national legislation being conceptualized as favorable to minority groups. The remaining three hypotheses are in line with the depiction of Europeanization as a norm promoter or catalyst for shifts in values (effects that cannot always be precisely measured). For instance, Pan-Europeanism (if it is defined as an increased attachment to Europe as a political space rather than one's country) could be regarded as an outgrowth of changes in citizens' mentalities because of trickle-down effects (from the "Europeanized" elites to the ordinary people).

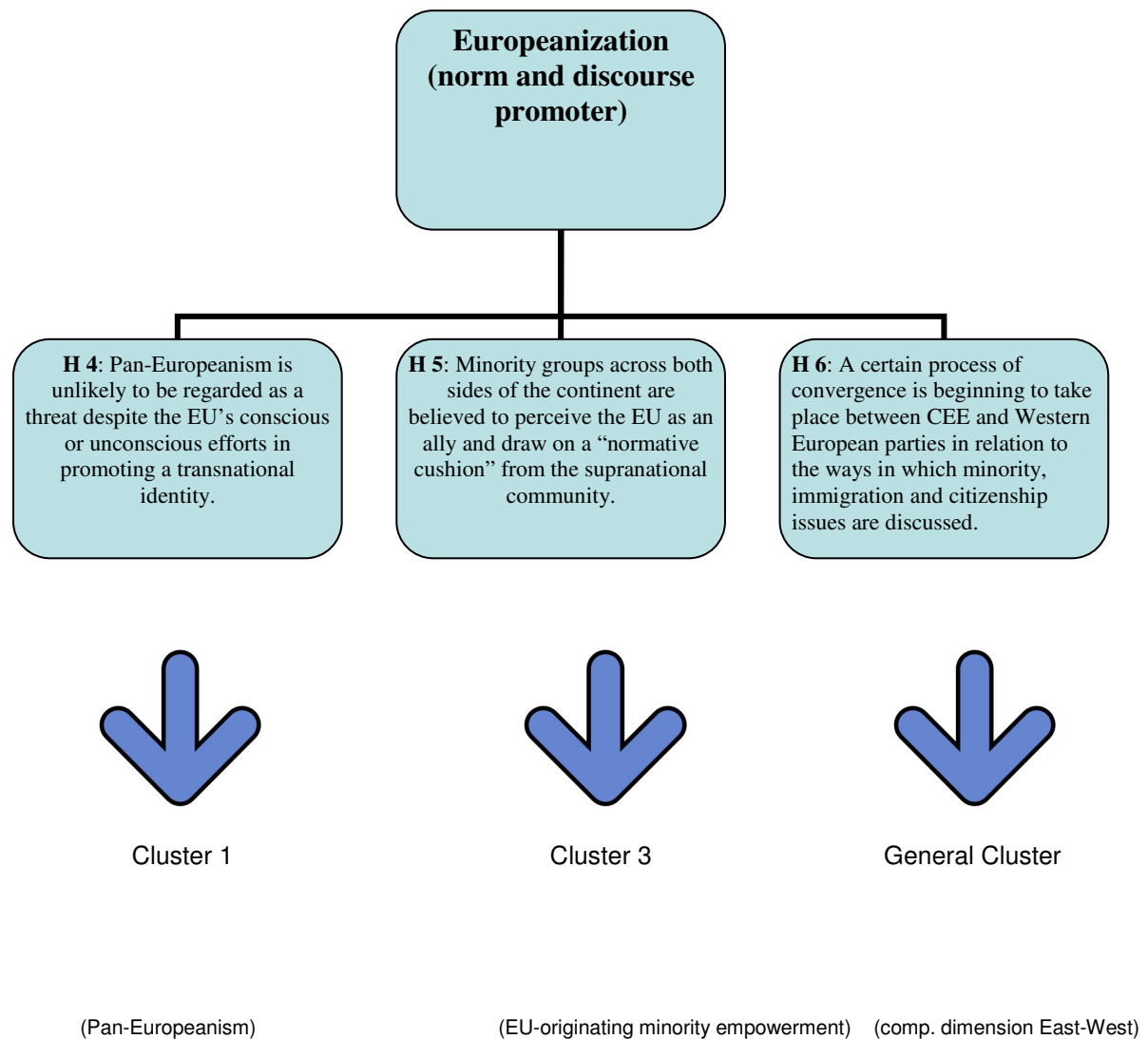
The U-turn arrow serves as a reminder that the two rough typologies of Europeanization cannot be analyzed in a vacuum and do not remain totally separate – there is a crossover between the Europeanization as a "norm promoter" frame and the Europeanization as "substantive benefits" frame when probing the EU impacts on specific issue areas – for instance, transformations in citizens' attitudes may over time lead to the passing of new legislation that actually benefits a clearly identifiable group.

Diagram 1

1 a)



1 b)



(please see Appendix 1 for a full list of questions per cluster)

Chapters One and Two served to provide a number of general clues regarding the likelihood (based on both theoretical and empirical factors) for certain core nationalist domains to be viewed through an EU-inspired lens, while at the same time making important distinctions between CEE and Western European populists' presumed attitudes. Chapter Three delves into concretics by looking into each of the four countries' experiences with **Europeanism, immigration, citizenship and regulation of majority-minority relations** as well as their interactions with **EU-level measures**.

Chapter Three: Country Profiles

Introduction and Rationale for Inclusion of the Case Study Countries

Chapter Three provides some essential background information for the empirical chapters which follow. It examines the nationalist trajectories peculiar to the four selected countries, attempting to illuminate the degree to which civic or ethnic conceptions of nationhood have been preponderant over different historical periods. It also looks into the evolution of their strands of Euroscepticism in the contemporary period (starting with the early 1990s), with the changes in party structures highlighted in the case of countries undergoing massive system changes, i.e. due to their emergence from a communist party rule. Consistent with the avowed interest in identifying the extent to which Europeanization developments affect nationalist-populist actors' perceptions of minority stakeholders, the relations between majority and minorities, characteristics of the countries' immigration regimes (where relevant), as well as potential points of conflict between core and non-core groups are also detailed. In a final section, Chapter Three introduces the four parties whose views are discussed in the empirical chapters of the thesis. Additional statistical information about the parties, such as membership size and electoral fortunes, is provided in Appendix 2.

The rationale for choosing the four countries is multifaceted. In the states that are to be analyzed, Euroscepticism is hardly a historical part of the "*modus operandi*" of the countries' political and national cultures, but is much more fluid and likely to be clearly tied to shifts in migration dynamics and perceived slights to nationalist symbols. Thus, I avoid casting too wide a net when it comes to different facets of Euroscepticism and have deliberately omitted the countries that are traditionally depicted as falling within the camp of "perennial

Eurosceptics”. In this regard, Great Britain constitutes a prominent example in the sense that its Euroscepticism is often regarded as being built into the political culture.⁴⁴⁶ As aptly put by Graham Watson, British MEP: “In UK public debate you have never had a great deal of support for European integration. Enthusiastically pro-European speeches by British politicians are better to be made outside of the territory of the UK, as Lord Digby Jones [former Minister of State for Trade and Investment] found out the hard way. In essence, there is a lack of acceptance in public debate that the European Union is good by definition”.⁴⁴⁷ In contrast, Germany and the Netherlands were among the pioneers in the establishment of the European communities and have consistently been regarded as Euroenthusiasts since the early stages of the development of the EU communities.

With regard to the Netherlands, “the discourse of “limits”- highlighted in the [case of the Dutch Eurosceptics], if lacking a strong positive vision of the European integration project, is nonetheless, by definition, firmly situated within that project, in opposition to a British debate still often marked by a more fundamental questioning of the project itself.”⁴⁴⁸ It has only been in recent years that Germany and the Netherlands have begun to change their tune and Euroscepticism has marked its presence on the political stage in a more visible manner. The sharpest decline in German support for Europe occurred in the aftermath of unification and Schieder maintains that since the early 1990s, “the view that Germany has a strong European vocation is no longer securely anchored in public opinion”.⁴⁴⁹ From a comparative standpoint, overall opposition to the EU among party families is slightly more pronounced in the Netherlands than in Germany.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁶ Dorn, Lisanne and Lars Dittmer. *The United Kingdom as an Outsider to the EU* (2007), p. 3.

⁴⁴⁷ Speech delivered by MEP Graham Watson for the IREP Group, University of Bath campus, 5 November 2012.

⁴⁴⁸ Harmsen, Robert. *Reframing a National Narrative of European Integration: the Shifting Contours of the Dutch European Debate* (2007), p. 19.

⁴⁴⁹ Schieder, Siegfried. *Germany: Problematizing Europe, or Evidence of an Emergent Euroscepticism?* (2011), p. 35.

⁴⁵⁰ Statham, Paul, Ruud Koopmans, Anke Tresch and Julie Firmstone. *Political Party Contestation: Emerging Euroscepticism or a Normalization of Eurocriticism?* (2010), p. 256.

The same applies to the CEE states with the increases in Eurosceptic sentiments largely manifesting themselves during critical juncture periods - just prior to or in the aftermath of EU accession, while in the preceding years support for accession was consistently high. Arguably, if one is to attempt to identify a general common ground between the four countries under scrutiny, it could be found in the degree to which the EU has shaped their national and political cultures – no matter whether such Europeanization has occurred through impositional or non-hierarchical means. While Germany and the Netherlands have not been subjected to the markedly top-down conditionality, which encouraged transformations in Bulgaria and Romania, both have been (albeit for different cultural and historical reasons) naturally receptive to EU measures and arguably demonstrated a certain penchant for accommodation in interactions with the EU.⁴⁵¹

In addition, in accordance with the thesis' focus on ethnic majority-ethnic minority empowerment dynamics attributable to Europeanization, the countries that have been selected are not ethnically homogeneous and are characterized by a high degree of attention paid to interethnic issues. Influential settled minorities (Hungarians and Turks) are capable of evoking threat perceptions among members of the majority groups in Bulgaria and Romania. The Hungarians and Turks are sometimes depicted as “imperial minorities” because during previous historical periods they were among the core groups of former imperial powers (Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire respectively) that controlled Romania and Bulgaria.⁴⁵² For instance, over the course of the 1848-1849 civil war in Transylvania that pitted Romanian and Hungarian nationalists against each other, the latter generally remained faithful to the Austrian emperor, and such events are still etched in the Romanian collective

⁴⁵¹ Eder, Claus and Wilfried Spohn. *Collective Memory and European Identity: the effects of integration and enlargement* (2005), p. 201.

⁴⁵² Mungiu-Pippidi, Alina. *The Influence of EU Accession on Minorities' Status in East Central Europe* (2007), p. 61.

consciousness.⁴⁵³ At the same time, the multicultural environment in the two “old” member states has sparked essentialist debates in recent years (especially when it comes to Islamic vs. core groups), as evinced by the *Leitkultur* discussions in Germany and the marked shifts in Dutch multicultural discourses and policies since the early 2000s.

Furthermore, while the countries are rather diverse when it comes to political cultures, degrees of affluence, as well as geopolitical influence, there is the potential to test the extent to which the seemingly preponderant ethnic nationalism in the CEE context really translates to a greater inclinations to view the EU as a threat in terms of the empowerment of natural opponents – ethnoregionalist factions. Moreover, of the cases selected, Bulgaria arguably represents a more moderate tradition of nationalism (relative to Romania), while the same relationship exists between the Netherlands and Germany, with the latter being closer to the “ethnic” side of the ethno-civic continuum.

I also pondered the inclusion of alternative countries in my case studies, but eventually decided against it. France is one country in which influential nationalist-populist parties operate, and where issues of interethnic harmony permeate the political discourses. However, similarly to the UK, France, despite its place at the heart of the European project, is often seen as a progenitor of generic Eurosceptic movements, as represented by what has been identified as its distinctive “*souverainiste*” discourse, especially after 1992.⁴⁵⁴ In parallel to the British case, at different historical junctures both the mainstream left and the mainstream right in France are gauged to have engaged in deliberate obtrusiveness when it came to the process of European integration. In Aylott’s terms, a supervening party management strategy (implying an agreement to disagree, which has “cushioned” the impact of EU issues on inner

⁴⁵³ Dragoman, Dragoş. *Ethnic Groups in Symbolic Conflict. The “Ethnicization” of Public Space in Romania* (2011), p. 111.

⁴⁵⁴ Harmsen, Robert. *A Dual Exceptionalism? British and French Patterns of Euroscepticism in Wider Comparative Perspective* (2005), pp. 2-3.

party cohesion) has been relatively rare in the case of France.⁴⁵⁵ To an extent, the Scandinavian or Nordic bloc also demonstrates “in-built” or unflinching Euroscepticism, which was one of the factors that influenced me not to include Scandinavian case studies. Mainstream parties within Scandinavian countries have frequently clashed over the question of European integration and general EU matters have often had the potential to turn into powder keg issues.⁴⁵⁶ The Scandinavian countries are thought to have been resistant to regional cooperation from a historical standpoint and have displayed a marked reluctance to recognize the power of supranational authorities, for instance when it came to formulations of security policies.⁴⁵⁷ In addition, EU membership itself has been viewed as representing a marked paradigm shift from an identity standpoint in the case of the Nordic countries. Frogner has drawn attention to the psychological and cultural burdens ushered in by EU membership in the case of countries like Sweden due to the very close alignment between Nordic identity and certain social standards in realms like the environment, which became increasingly subject to EU regulations, leading to problematic shifts in social policy.⁴⁵⁸

Lastly, I tried to retain a sense of realism and kept my eyes peeled for factors like logistics and purely administrative considerations. My knowledge of the Bulgarian language and (perhaps) better feel for the intricacies of the institutional and party environments served me well when it came to the actual field work that was undertaken. Similarly, my fluency in German worked to my benefit when immersing myself in the German party environment. While my knowledge of Dutch was less advanced, I had lived in the Netherlands for a year and was well aware that English was in many respects a “*lingua franca*” in the Dutch context, so any barriers arising out of lack of fluency in Dutch turned out to be negligible. In short, it

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid (citing Nicholas Aylott. *Swedish Social Democracy and European Integration: the people’s home on the market*, 1999).

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁷ Ingebritsen, Christine. *The Nordic States and European Unity* (1998), p. 186 (citing Truls Frogner. *En lang marsj mot Europa? Politiske perspektiver på Norge og EF/The long way to Europe? Political Perspectives on Norway and the EEC*, 1988, p. 98).

is my belief that this balancing exercise between the purely academic and the more technical considerations was not detrimental to the purposes of the thesis.

1: Bulgaria

1.1 Introduction

Bulgaria together with Romania secured accession in 2007. Despite emerging from communist party rule as one of the CEE countries with the lowest GDP, as well as being characterized by the substantial presence of settled ethnic minorities (Turkish and Roma people constituting the largest groups and together accounting for close to 15 % of the population), it has managed to avoid embroilment in any of the nationalist conflicts, which arose out of the dissolution of Yugoslavia and affected the fortunes of the majority of Western Balkan states. However, the two years preceding EU accession were accompanied by an increase in populist activities and the emergence of a fully-fledged Eurosceptic party, Ataka, which however has as yet been unable to become part of a Bulgarian government.

1.2 Bulgarian nationalism

The evolution of the concept of a “nation” in the Bulgarian national context is regarded as rather complicated. Both civic and ethnic understandings of the national community have been present in Bulgarian history; post-communist governments have been consistent in

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

subscribing to a civic interpretation of the Bulgarian nation, as also established in the Bulgarian constitution.

Filipov maintains that in the case of Bulgaria strong elements of “national self-identification” (in the modern sense) were to be found as early as the 9th or 10th centuries, thus prior to the transition from feudalism to capitalism, with the Bulgarian state possessing elements of a “nationalizing entity”.⁴⁵⁹ During the National Revival period (which has been traced to at least the mid 18th century, with Paisius of Hilendar one of the major figureheads), the whole process of “renationalization” appeared to be non-reflective and sparked few disagreements among Bulgarian scholars regarding the precise contours of the Bulgarian identity: the Bulgarian *ethnie* was seen as encompassing the ethnocultural areas of Misia, Thrace and Macedonia, with the Muslim-influenced Bulgarians left out of the definition.⁴⁶⁰ Essentially, the whole period between the start of the Bulgarian National Revival and the end of WWII was characterized by the preponderance of primordial and strongly ethnically based conceptions of the Bulgarian nation. The common Bulgarian language, blood ties, as well as belonging to the Christian religious and cultural traditions were seen as constituting necessary components of a unified Bulgarian national identity. In these years, Bulgaria failed to develop a coherent national programme for the unification of all Bulgarians of different faiths.⁴⁶¹

One of the factors behind the predominance of this exclusionary form of nationalism could be tied to the role of Islam and Christianity in the years of the Ottoman yoke, with these two religions serving to a large extent to “ethnically differentiate” between Bulgarians and “others”.⁴⁶² Christianity was juxtaposed against Islam by its representation of the “conquered” or “vanquished” nation, while Islam was seen as the essential building block of

⁴⁵⁹ Zagorov, Orlin. *България в Европа на нациите (Bulgaria as part of Europe of the Nations)* (2009), p. 62 (citing Dimitar Filipov. *Българската нация: Възходи и драми/The Bulgarian Nation: Highs and Lows*, 2000).

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 67.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid, p. 69.

the oppressors.⁴⁶³ In addition, the pro-German orientations of the Bulgarian foreign policy doctrines since the end of the 19th century have also been gauged as a contributing factor for the continuation of this trend, as they encouraged the Bulgarian elites to toe an ethnic line when it came to their understandings of nationalism.⁴⁶⁴

At the same time, a brand of “democratic nationalism” has been seen as typifying the Bulgarian experience after the country secured independence in 1878, stressing the possibilities of brotherly coexistence with other nations, as well as including an admission that clear demarcations between nations could not always be identified.⁴⁶⁵ Thus, like in many other communist nations, in the 1944-1989 period the Bulgarians were easily swayed by the communist elites when it came to accepting the merits of the “Leninist” understanding of nationhood, implying the rejection of tribal, ethnic or racial bonds as building blocks of nations.⁴⁶⁶ Quite fittingly, in the early communist years, some of the Bulgarian elites helped “breathe life into” the concept of a separate Macedonian identity, not appearing to regard it as an assault on the indissolubility of the Bulgarian identity.⁴⁶⁷ Still, in the 1980s the country (under Todor Zhivkov’s leadership) saw the orchestration of aggressive ethnic assimilation campaigns directed at the Bulgarian Turks and Pomaks, which culminated in the “National Revival” process of 1984-1985.⁴⁶⁸ In the years after the collapse of Communism, the civic conception of Bulgarian nationhood tended to occupy Bulgarian historiography. In 1995, Bliznakov, in his work “10 Theses of the Bulgarian” affirmed that “anyone who self-identifies as belonging to the Bulgarian nation is to be considered as such”, discarding the

⁴⁶² Roudometof, Victor. Nationalism, Globalization, Eastern Orthodoxy – Unthinking the “Clash of Civilizations” in Southeastern Europe (1999), p. 240.

⁴⁶³ Zagorov, Orlin. *България в Европа на нациите (Bulgaria as part of Europe of the Nations)* (2009), p. 68.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 54.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid, pp. 186-187.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 62.

⁴⁶⁷ Kojouharov, Anton. Bulgarian “Macedonian” Nationalism: a Conceptual Overview (2004), p. 284.

⁴⁶⁸ Creed, Gerald W. *The Bases of Bulgaria’s Ethnic Policies* (1990), p. 18.

salience of precisely established ethnic origins, religious ties and “family memories”.⁴⁶⁹ A clearly civic understanding of nationhood has been unambiguously enshrined in the Bulgarian Constitution since the early 1990s, in contrast to some other CEE countries like Slovakia, where the way the fundamental principles of the state were worded left more room for “ethnically exclusive” conceptions.⁴⁷⁰ Contemporary readings of Bulgarian nationalist tradition continue to emphasize the relevance of the blend between ethnic and civic elements.⁴⁷¹

Pertaining to the question of the potency of the European identity, “Europeanism” (alongside Bulgarianism and a feeling of belonging to the “Slavic vortex”) has been described as the third primary element of the Bulgarian national ideology since the proclamation of national independence.⁴⁷² The inclination to find a place for Bulgaria within the family of European nations is regarded as a remnant of the National Revival years, but there was also a certain negative connotation attached to this aspiration in the period between the two world wars, with the “cultural assimilation” frames, as well as the “ethnocultural loss of identity” ones being dominant.⁴⁷³ According to Boyadzhieva, there have been two waves in the Europeanization of Bulgaria: the first one (between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the Second World War) has been depicted as “spontaneous” while the second one (“contemporary Europeanization” after WWII) incorporated a greater element of agency into it.⁴⁷⁴ Within Bulgarian historiography, the beginning of Europeanization has generally been traced to the French Revolution and at times has been viewed as entailing the imposition

⁴⁶⁹ Zagorov, Orlin. *България в Европа на нациите (Bulgaria as part of Europe of the Nations)* (2009), pp. 70-71 (citing G. Bliznakov. *Накъде, човече: Защо пропадна социализмът? Биологическата същност на човешкото поведение: Има ли справедливо общество? Изходът/Where next: Why did socialism fail. The Biological Basis of human behaviour: can there be a just society? The solution*, 1995).

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 72.

⁴⁷¹ Hajdiniak, Marko, Maia Koseva and Antonina Zheliazkova. *Модерност и традиция: европейско и национално в България (Modernity and tradition: the European and the national in Bulgaria)* (2012), p. 16.

⁴⁷² Ibid, p. 308.

⁴⁷³ Ibid, p. 309.

of “Western lifestyles” on the “spiritual East”.⁴⁷⁵ The “Europeanization” of the Ottoman Empire which began in 1839 with the implementation of more liberal reforms with regard to the economy and the administrative system contributed to the intensification of the National Revival processes on the territory of Bulgaria and the ripening of the conditions for well-organized revolts against Ottoman rule.⁴⁷⁶ After 1878, Europeanism in Bulgaria was almost universally associated (by traditionalists and modernists alike) with the “strategic and intelligent use” of foreign cultural exemplars.⁴⁷⁷ In an interview in 2005, historian Andrey Pantev expressed his conviction that during Stefan Stambolov’s tenure as Prime Minister (1887-1894), Bulgaria for the first time succeeded in “establishing a foothold in the European family of nations” and the striving towards Europeanization began to be conceptualized as sharply opposed to the “Russianization” of the country.⁴⁷⁸ Since the turn of the century, German cultural exchanges have been characterized as one of the main facilitators when it came to the spread of Europeanism/European identity in Bulgaria,⁴⁷⁹ with pro-German sentiments continuing to be prominent in the period between the two world wars,⁴⁸⁰ though on both the elite and popular levels Bulgaria remained “sympathetically neutral” rather than genuinely fascist oriented.⁴⁸¹

⁴⁷⁴ Boyadjieva, Elena. *Историческите срещи между българската и немската култура. Междудличностни общувания. (1919-1939)* (The Historical Meetings between the Bulgarian and the German Culture. Interpersonal Communication (1919-1939) (2003), p. 33.

⁴⁷⁵ Zagorov, Orlin. *България в Европа на нациите (Bulgaria as part of Europe of the Nations)* (2009), p. 260.

⁴⁷⁶ Baewa, Iskra. *Представата за Европа в модерна България - от Османската Империя до Европейския Съюз (Perceptions of Europe in modern Bulgaria – from the Ottoman Empire to the European Union)* (2012), p. 172.

⁴⁷⁷ Ivanova, Radost. Factors that caused the changes in the day-to-day cultural activities of contemporary Bulgarians (2005), p. 22.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 93.

⁴⁷⁹ Boyadjieva, Elena. *Историческите срещи между българската и немската култура. Междудличностни общувания. (1919-1939)* (The Historical Meetings between the Bulgarian and the German Culture. Interpersonal Communication (1919-1939) (2003), p. 32.

⁴⁸⁰ Baewa, Iskra. *Представата за Европа в модерна България - от Османската Империя до Европейския Съюз (Perceptions of Europe in modern Bulgaria – from the Ottoman Empire to the European Union)* (2012), pp. 181-182.

⁴⁸¹ Daskalov, Roumen. *От Стамболов до Живков. Големите спорове за новата българска история (From Stambolov to Zhivkov. The “grand debates and controversies” regarding the contemporary Bulgarian history)* (2009), p. 237.

While Europeanism has generally been recognized as neatly co-existing with the Bulgarian identity, it has also faced some stiff challenges in academic circles and on the popular level. Prior to Bulgaria achieving independence, it acquired a negative stigma among some nationalist Bulgarians due to the tendency of a number of pro-Western European Bulgarian intellectuals to express the belief (in the years preceding liberation from the Ottoman yoke) that Bulgaria would only be able to prosper if it remained simultaneously within the political confines of the Ottoman Empire and the cultural confines of the West.⁴⁸² One major source of anti-Europeanist sentiments has been the Bulgarian Orthodox church. The influence of religion on Bulgarian social and political life increased in the aftermath of the country's liberation from Ottoman rule and "European social mores" tended to be viewed with suspicion by the church elders.⁴⁸³ During the communist era, Pan-Slavism was put on a pedestal, which further contributed to anti-Europeanism and such sentiments generally worked to the advantage of the communist regime.⁴⁸⁴ Russophilia retains its popularity in certain nationalist circles - pro-Russian nationalists subscribe to the view that Bulgaria has managed to secure for itself Russia's everlasting goodwill, which is labeled as the country's "greatest historical achievement".⁴⁸⁵ In the course of the later years of communist rule, there was an underlying feeling among pro-European intellectuals that Bulgaria had been left to its own devices (by Western Europeans) in its efforts to "Europeanize".⁴⁸⁶ Consequently, on the general societal level, the early 1990s were characterized by considerable sympathy for European models; such sentiments were however in part a reflection of the creeping nihilism and eagerness to throw away all the remnants of communism. Krasteva recalls the opinion of

⁴⁸² Hajdiniak, Marko, Maia Koseva and Antonina Zheliazkova. *Модерност и традиция: европейско и национално в България* (Modernity and tradition: the European and the national in Bulgaria) (2012), pp. 21-22.

⁴⁸³ Encheva, Svetla. *Православната етика и духът на посттоталитаризма* (Orthodox Ethics and the Spirit of Post-Totalitarianism) (2002), p. 305.

⁴⁸⁴ Ivanova, Radost. Factors that caused the changes in the day-to-day cultural activities of contemporary Bulgarians (2005), pp. 16-17.

⁴⁸⁵ Bozhkov, Veselin. *Петвековният геноцид (Five centuries of genocide)* (2013), p. 442.

⁴⁸⁶ Zagorov, Orlin. *България в Европа на нациите (Bulgaria as part of Europe of the Nations)* (2009), p. 312.

a university student interviewed in 1992: “In Bulgaria, there was a tendency to ascribe normality to all other countries with the exception of our own and identify with any type of foreign entity”.⁴⁸⁷ In addition, this outpouring of support for Europe has been attributed to the “syndrome of desperately sought modernity” and the importance placed on throwing off the chains of economic backwardness⁴⁸⁸ as well as recognition of the core EU countries as bearers of civilization, where Bulgaria had seemingly fallen short.⁴⁸⁹ At the same time, in the early 1990s Europe was conceptualized as somewhat more distant in comparison to the Central European countries - the official and popular level rhetoric in Bulgaria centered on “finding the path to Europe”; the “return to Europe” notion did not feature as commonly in discourses as for example in Czechoslovakia or Hungary.⁴⁹⁰ Thus, considerable efforts would be invested in order for European aspirations to become reality.

1.3 Parties and Europeanization in the aftermath of the communist collapse

During the communist years Bulgaria was characterized by a high degree of symbiosis between the party and the intelligentsia (unlike most of the other CEE countries), which is gauged to have encouraged the Communist Party to embrace a form of “communist nationalism” and tap into post-1878 nationalist discourses.⁴⁹¹ Nonetheless, academics consistently regard Bulgaria as the country whose political system modeled itself the most closely after the “Soviet center”.⁴⁹²

⁴⁸⁷ Krasteva, Anna. *Българската етническа политика* (The Bulgarian Ethnic Politics) (2004), pp. 44-45.

⁴⁸⁸ Todorov, Antony. *Граждани, партии, избори: България 1879-2009* (Citizens, Parties, Elections: Bulgaria 1879-2009) (2010), p. 502.

⁴⁸⁹ Semov, Marko. *Избрани съчинения, том 2: Изследвания и есета за българската народопсихология* (Selected Essays, Volume 2: Analyses and Essays pertaining to Bulgarian national character) (2013), p. 455.

⁴⁹⁰ Baewa, Iskra. *Представата за Европа в модерна България - от Османската Империя до Европейския Съюз* (Perceptions of Europe in modern Bulgaria – from the Ottoman Empire to the European Union) (2012), p. 184.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid, p. 173.

As a whole, post-communist interactions with parties from other European states and the membership in party families are gauged to have been highly conducive to the process of maturation of national parties in Bulgaria and served to enhance their legitimacy.⁴⁹³ For instance, in Spirova's conception, the PES managed to play a key role in engendering a change in the attitudes of the BSP (the Bulgarian communist successor party) towards the EU. In the early 1990s, the BSP was universally distrusted in Western Europe, as it was thought to be following in the footsteps of its predecessors in terms of persisting in being anti-integrationist and non-democratic with regard to its structure; accordingly, PES initially preferred to extend a helping hand to some smaller leftist parties in Bulgaria and spurred the more pro-European members of BSP to splinter from the "mother party" and set up their own formation.⁴⁹⁴ The reformation of BSP, accompanied by a shift towards markedly pro EU positions, occurred in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and it was only following the completion of this turnaround process that PES decided to recognize it as a possible future partner.⁴⁹⁵ The EU proddings arguably strengthened the hand of those BSP members who had reached a realization of the necessity of "ideological cleansing" and encouraged more moderate politicians to withdraw their support from the influential leaders like Zhan Videnov who remained resistant to abrupt changes in the party's ideological profile.⁴⁹⁶ According to political analyst Ognyan Minchev, despite legitimating itself in the eyes of European parties, prior to the emergence of Ataka, BSP was manifestly more successful than its centre-right counterpart (SDS) in "re-appropriating the full spectrum of nationalist political discourses" by drawing on its predecessors' part in the anti-Turkish assimilationist campaigns as well as

⁴⁹² Ibid.

⁴⁹³ Dimitrov, Vesselin. *Political Transitions in Central and Eastern Europe: Domestic and External Dimensions* (2000), p. 16. (also cited in Dandolov, Philip. *Nationalist-populist parties and the EU: attitudes and their determinants* (pragmatic and/or ideological), 2010).

⁴⁹⁴ Spirova, Maria. *Europarties and party development in EU-candidate states: the case of Bulgaria* (2008), pp. 795-796.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 803.

⁴⁹⁶ Prodanov, Vassil. *Теория на българския преход (A Theory of the Bulgarian transition)* (2012), pp. 455-456.

its continued dabbling with implicitly anti-Western (and by extension anti-EU) “defensive Russophilic and provincial nationalism”.⁴⁹⁷

Furthermore, European party foundations and institutes like the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Goethe Institute deserve credit for making contributions in terms of setting up seminars, conferences, and discussion forums in order to help with the honing of election strategies of Bulgarian parties.⁴⁹⁸ Consequently, being an outgrowth of the Bulgarian parties’ ideological evolution, as a result of their emulation of the European party families’ tenets, since 2001 the Bulgarian party system has generally been evaluated as neatly fitting the Western model of organization meaning more unified political actors on the left side of the political spectrum and greater fragmentation on the right.⁴⁹⁹ Also, since the late 1990s, an undeniable “permissive consensus” regarding EU membership characterized the party environment in Bulgaria.⁵⁰⁰ A further testimony to the existence of a permissive consensus pertaining to EU membership in Bulgaria are the classifications by Taggart relevant to the late 1990s and early 2000s – in this theorist’s categorization of various political parties within diverse countries, not a single one in Bulgaria was thought to warrant the label of a “hard” or even a “soft” Eurosceptic.⁵⁰¹

Ataka, which was formed in 2005, was arguably the first party in Bulgaria since the fall of communism that openly contested the legitimacy of the Turkish minority party MRF and its increasing participation in the upper echelons of the political system, bringing forth an

⁴⁹⁷ Minchev, Ognian. *Социален консерватизъм или недовършената архитектура на българския политически живот* (Social Conservatism or the unfinished architecture of Bulgarian political life) (2013).

⁴⁹⁸ Todorov, Antony. The Role of Political Parties in Bulgaria’s Accession to the EU (1999), pp. 12-13. (also cited in Dandolov, Philip. Nationalist-populist parties and the EU: attitudes and their determinants (pragmatic and/or ideological), 2010).

⁴⁹⁹ Stoychev, Stoycho P. Europeanization of the Bulgarian Party System – Dynamics and Effects (2008), p. 9.

⁵⁰⁰ Smilov, Daniel. *Bulgaria* (2008), p. 21.

⁵⁰¹ Taggart, Paul and Aleks Szczerbiak. Parties, Positions and Europe: Euroscepticism in the EU Candidate States of Central and Eastern Europe (2001), p. 17.

ethnic slant to issues like corruption.⁵⁰² Still, the type of nationalism exhibited by Ataka, despite the generally bombastic rhetoric that was adopted, appeared to be in line with the more inclusive (civic) rather than an exclusive (ethnic) conceptualization. For instance, it has claimed to recognize as a member of the Bulgarian nation anyone who speaks Bulgarian and identifies with Bulgarian culture, refraining from equating a single *ethnie* with the Bulgarian nation-state.⁵⁰³ The EU influence has to be considered if one is to uncover the factors conducive to the rise of populism within Bulgaria, culminating with Ataka's successful first showing at the national elections in the summer of 2005 (see Appendix 2). Analysts like Krastev and Andreev saw the overlapping party profiles and accommodative attitudes of the two principal Bulgarian parties in the early 2000s (to an extent attributable to the passive and active leverage of the EU) as having given the impression of an "agenda exhaustion" and "elite collusion" to the general public.⁵⁰⁴ Following these developments, the National Movement Simeon II (NMSS) was the first beneficiary of the populist drift in Bulgaria, winning the elections in 2001 on a largely populist-based platform.⁵⁰⁵ However, its rule turned out to be disappointing due to a downturn in economic fortunes and unresolved corruption issues. As it was a markedly pro-EU movement, its brand of pro-EU populism was discredited and consequently the next elections provided new openings for Ataka, which chose the right movement to employ Eurosceptic rhetoric.⁵⁰⁶ Arguably, Ataka's success also reflected a general disillusionment on the part of citizens due to some negative juvenile delinquency trends associated with post-communism as well as the decline in the fortunes of

⁵⁰² Ghodsee, Kristen. *Left Wing, Right Wing, Everything – Xenophobia, Neo-totalitarianism and Populist Politics in Bulgaria* (2008), pp. 32-33.

⁵⁰³ Zhecheva, Kristina. *Ataka – between nationalism and populism* (2007), p. 60.

⁵⁰⁴ Cholova, Blagovesta. *Populism in Bulgaria – a recent phenomenon?* (2010), p. 4. (also cited in Dandolov, Philip. *Nationalist-populist parties and the EU: attitudes and their determinants* (pragmatic and/or ideological), 2010).

⁵⁰⁵ Stoychev, Stoycho P. *Europeanization of the Bulgarian Party System – Dynamics and Effects* (2008), pp. 3-4.

⁵⁰⁶ Stefanova, Boyka. *Voting "a la carte": Electoral Support for the Radical Right in the 2005 Bulgarian Parliamentary Elections* (2007), pp. 60-63.

the traditional centre-right in Bulgaria that had begun in the early 2000s.⁵⁰⁷ References to the sordid realities of the “vulgar Bulgarian transition” (connected to the perceptions that many criminal characters have been able to profit from the “new capitalism” and have become influential in the banking and political sectors) are commonly included in Bulgarian political commentary.⁵⁰⁸ However, despite its electoral success in 2005 Ataka had no chance of joining a governing coalition. There have been strong indications that the Europarties played a significant role in persuading their mainstream Bulgarian party counterparts not to allow Ataka to exhibit a belief that it could find itself in a position at the helm of the country.⁵⁰⁹

1.4 Ethnic harmony issues in Bulgaria

An acute sense of vulnerability has been identified as a strong feature of Bulgarian nationalism, attributable to close to five centuries of being a constituent part of Ottoman Empire, as well as the subsequent loss of core historical territories like Macedonia and Thrace. Other Eastern European countries like Poland with a higher degree of ethnic homogeneity (post-1945) have been characterized as displaying a much higher level of national self-confidence than Bulgaria and thus have been gauged as less likely to react with alarm to religious practices of ethnic minorities.⁵¹⁰ Furthermore, Soulet characterizes Poland as having a “solidly grounded identity”, while Bulgaria arguably falls into the camp of the countries with “mutated identities” due to the perception of many citizens that the country has usually failed to come strong during periods of adversity and has frequently been on the

⁵⁰⁷ Sugarev, Edvin. *Подлите времена (The treacherous times)* (2013), p. 269.

⁵⁰⁸ New Media Group. *Престъпна Империя – Възходът на тандема Донеv-Павлов (Criminal Empire – the political and business advancement of the duo Donev-Pavlov)* (2012), p. 5.

⁵⁰⁹ Spirova, Maria. The parliamentary elections in Bulgaria – June 2005 (2006), p. 618.

⁵¹⁰ Anderson, John. *The Treatment of Religious Minorities in South-Eastern Europe: Greece and Bulgaria Compared* (2002), p. 27.

“wrong side of history”.⁵¹¹ However, despite (or possibly because) of such experiences, traditions of toleration have tended to be ascribed to Bulgarian nationalism, especially in relation to the treatment of national minorities.⁵¹² Galabov, referring to the first decades of the 20th century, maintains that the love of freedom constitutes an essential part of the Bulgarian mentality and has shaped the attitudes towards minority groups within Bulgaria. “If one is a politician and does not desire to be popular, one of the easiest ways to achieve that is to encourage the persecution of minorities”.⁵¹³ While political scientist Boris Popivanov maintains that in 1990 Bulgaria appeared especially susceptible to sliding into ethnic conflict (more so than most of the other post-socialist states),⁵¹⁴ the Bulgarian ethnic model has since then generally been regarded as representing a success, especially given that the country managed to avoid the bloodshed and political chaos, which befell its neighbour Yugoslavia due to its inability to find a blueprint that could properly balance out ethnic claims. The Communist Party of Bulgaria actually set the stage for its adoption in late 1989 when it abandoned its heavy-handed assimilationist campaigns and allowed the Bulgarian Turks to use their Muslim names.⁵¹⁵ The nature of the Bulgarian model of ethnic relations was frequently lauded by Bulgarian scholars during the 1999 Kosovo War in order to distinguish Bulgaria from its neighboring states and emphasize the country’s perceived right to lead the way in terms of helping reclaim the phrase “unpredictable Balkans” by attaching a positive connotation to it.⁵¹⁶

⁵¹¹ Soulet, Jean-François. *Histoire de l'Europe de l'Est, de la Seconde Guerre mondiale à nos jours (A History of Eastern Europe from the Second World War to the present days)* (2007), pp. 390, 392.

⁵¹² Dimitrov, Vesselin. In Search of a Homogeneous Nation: the Assimilation of Bulgaria’s Turkish Minority, 1984-1985 (2000), p. 10.

⁵¹³ Zagorov, Orlin. *България в Европа на нациите (Bulgaria as part of Europe of the Nations)* (2009), p. 357 (citing A Galabov. *Социалната Идентичност в условия на конфликт/Social Identity under conflict*, 1995, pp. 148-150).

⁵¹⁴ Interview with Boris Popivanov, *Trud newspaper*, 9 November 2013.

⁵¹⁵ Parvanov, Anton. *Косовският възел на Балканите: възникване, развитие, решения (The Kosovo conundrum on the Balkans: origins, developments, solutions)* (2011), p. 304.

⁵¹⁶ Krasteva, Anna. *Българската етническа политика (The Bulgarian Ethnic Policies)* (2004), p. 33.

However, a more nuanced examination reveals many grey areas when it comes to Bulgarian policies towards minorities prior to and in the aftermath of the communist collapse. While in the 1950s and 1960s Bulgaria was one of the countries that was the most faithful in following the “proletarian internationalist” philosophy in the realm of ethnic minorities (for instance, due to the governments’ efforts to elevate the profile of the Turkish minority in both a socio-economic and cultural sense),⁵¹⁷ the rights granted to Turks in Bulgaria have sometimes been unfavourably compared to those guaranteed to Hungarians in Romania, especially during the most oppressive periods, and in the early 1990s public attitudes towards minority rights are gauged to have been more “unflinchingly antagonistic” in Bulgaria than in its northern neighbor.⁵¹⁸ Elster has deemed Bulgaria’s post-communist constitution to be one of the most illiberal in the CEE region, as it did not recognize the existence of minorities in the country and banned political parties formed along ethnic or racial lines, although the MRF was allowed to slip through the cracks by the Bulgarian Constitutional Court (BCC).⁵¹⁹ In addition, the language rights of minorities when it came to instruction in public schools were found to have been severely compromised up until the early 2000s.⁵²⁰ All in all, evaluations of the Bulgarian policy evolution in this domain have suggested that since the beginning of the 1990s the country has moved from a state policy that intended to eliminate ethnic differences towards (recently) a minority rights regime that offers non-territorial cultural minority rights. However, the Roma, and especially ethnically ambiguous groups (from the standpoint of the Bulgarian state) like Macedonians and Pomaks have rarely managed to reap dividends from the granting of such rights.⁵²¹ When it comes to majority

⁵¹⁷ Baewa, Iskra. *Източна Европа през XX век. Идеи, конфликти, митове* (Eastern Europe in the 20th century. *Ideas, Conflicts, Myths*) (2010), p. 234.

⁵¹⁸ McIntosh, Mary E., Martha Abele Mac Iver, Daniel G. Abele and David B. Nolle. *Minority Rights and Majority Rule: Ethnic Tolerance in Bulgaria and Romania* (1995), pp. 957-958.

⁵¹⁹ Rechel, Bernd. *Minority Rights in Central and Eastern Europe* (2009), p. 78 (citing John Elster. *Constitution-Making in Eastern Europe: Rebuilding the Boat in the Open Sea*, 1993, pp. 199-200).

⁵²⁰ Ibid, p. 79.

⁵²¹ Ibid, p. 80.

attitudes towards the minority, surveys have revealed that minority rights remain unpopular among Bulgarians, with almost one third (as of 2005) opposing the presence of minority representatives in the Bulgarian National Assembly (BNA).⁵²² As for EU conditionality, it has been identified as having played a significant role in the realm of minority rights, with the EU gauged to have actively “shepherded” Bulgaria when it came to the majority of the policy changes after 1997.⁵²³ Even prior to membership, the European Union in general and the European regional policies in particular exerted a very significant influence on the economic and administrative development of minority or mixed regions in Bulgaria.⁵²⁴

In 1990, the MRF, which was acknowledged as the main party representing the interests of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, was officially established. Despite some initial constitutional challenges, as mentioned in the above paragraph, it received full legal recognition in 1992.⁵²⁵ The MRF has generally been gauged to have been a responsible and moderate actor in the Bulgarian political field. Its leader, Ahmed Doğan, has been credited with significantly elevating the profile of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, making its participation in politics relatively “socially acceptable” from the standpoint of the majority population.⁵²⁶ The MRF has as a rule refrained from espousing revanchist attitudes due to the National Revival process and made sure to stay clear of any semblances of secessionist claims for provinces with substantial Turkish populations like Kurdzhali.⁵²⁷ In the EU realm, it has also attempted to follow this pattern. In both the 2007 and 2009 EP elections, MRF submitted multiethnic party lists. Its European electoral platforms tended not to contain any

⁵²² Ibid, p. 84. (also cited in Dandolov, Philip. Nationalist-populist parties and the EU: attitudes and their determinants (pragmatic and/or ideological), 2010).

⁵²³ Ibid, p. 85.

⁵²⁴ Lozanova, Galina and Marko Hajdiniak. *Региони, Малцинства и Европейска Интеграция: Анализ и препоръки за политически практики относно мюсюлманските малцинства (турци и българи мюсюлмани) в Южния централен регион на България* (Regions, Minorities and European Integration: Analysis and Recommendations pertaining to political practices when it comes to Muslim minorities (Turks and Pomaks) in the Southern Central Region of Bulgaria) (2006), p. 5.

⁵²⁵ Genov, Nikolay. Radical Nationalism in Contemporary Bulgaria (2010), p. 37.

⁵²⁶ Roth, Jürgen. *The New Bulgarian Demons. The Bulgarian Mafia network/Die neuen Dämonen. Das Bulgarische Mafianetzwerk* (2008), p. 233.

demands and policies which explicitly mentioned the ethnic Turk community.⁵²⁸ Besides, in contrast to those counties in CEE with sizeable Russian or Hungarian minorities, minority kin-states have not played a major role with regard to minority rights policies in Bulgaria.⁵²⁹

Nonetheless, implicit challenges to the MRF's legitimacy and the entertainment of suspicions pertaining to the degree of its influence on the upper echelons of power have been a recurrent phenomenon of Bulgarian politics, especially since the early 2000s.

Bozhkov cautions that the 23 years since the collapse of communism have seen Bulgaria at its most vulnerable in the post-Ottoman era, in part because of Turkey's successful "ethnicization" of issues pertaining to the Bulgarian Turks and the Roma (some of the Muslim Roma embrace a Turkish identity).⁵³⁰ Alternative ethnic parties that represent the interests of the Turks in Bulgaria like the National Party Freedom and Dignity that was formed in December 2012 by former MRF member Kassim Dal have also stoked fears on the part of members of the ethnic majority due to being associated with subversive tendencies; for instance, Dal is believed to be supportive of the assumed Neo-Ottomanist Recep Erdoğan.⁵³¹ In addition, those Bulgarians who do not regard Russia as a natural ally of Bulgaria because of their belief that a common Slavic kinship was artificially created between the two countries during the communist era or lingering suspicions pertaining to Russia's "true motives" for securing Bulgaria's liberation,⁵³² associate the increase in pro-Turkish activism in the country with a swelling of the ranks of "Russophiles" in Bulgarian society and an undesirable strengthening of the Russian influence on the country.⁵³³ This is in part attributable to their belief that a significant number of Bulgarians will feel backed into a

⁵²⁷ Genov, Nikolay. *Radical Nationalism in Contemporary Bulgaria* (2010), pp. 37-38.

⁵²⁸ Spirova, Maria. *The EP Elections as an Arena for Ethnic Minority Representation: Evidence from new EU Member States* (2010), p. 19.

⁵²⁹ Rechel, Bernd. *Minority Rights in Central and Eastern Europe* (2009), p. 84.

⁵³⁰ Bozhkov, Veselin. *Петвековният геноцид (Five centuries of genocide)* (2013), p. 450.

⁵³¹ Markova, Genka. Interview with Iskra Baewa, 17 August 2013.

⁵³² Ivanov, Roumen. *Българската народност XIX - XXI век (The Bulgarian ethnic identity from the 19th to the 21st century)* (2013), pp. 289, 295.

corner and vote for parties with a “pro-Russian agenda” rather than those that are “genuinely Bulgarian” as a way of choosing the lesser evil and encouraging Russia to retain its hold on Bulgaria in order to provide a check on Turkish attempts to threaten Bulgarian nationhood. From the perspective of these exclusively pro-Western Bulgarians, Bulgaria is presumed to still be very much within the Russian sphere of influence despite the façade of Europeanization.⁵³⁴

As for the immigrant situation in the country, in the first years of the democratic transition in Bulgaria (and up to the end of the 1990s), immigration issues were of very low salience in political discourse. In the early 2000s, immigration matters timidly entered the political discourse when a small right-wing party, Saint George’s Day, attempted to develop different categories, distinguishing between “good” and “bad” foreigners in its rhetoric. As mentioned above, it was only in 2005 when the first extreme party – Ataka - managed to pass the 4 % threshold and enter Parliament. However, there has been up to now no strong inclination on the part of this party to employ security-related language when it comes to migration,⁵³⁵ though this has changed slightly given Ataka’s dissatisfaction with the handling of the current Syrian refugee crisis⁵³⁶ by the Bulgarian government and EU institutions.⁵³⁷

⁵³³ Baewa, Iskra. *Източна Европа през XX век. Идеи, конфликти, митове* (Eastern Europe in the 20th century. Ideas, Conflicts, Myths) (2010), p. 153.

⁵³⁴ Lilov, Grigor. *Тайният проект Бойко Борисов* (*The Secret Project of Boyko Borisov*) (2008), p. 258.

⁵³⁵ Petkov, Krastyo. *The late Ethno-nationalisms in Bulgaria: their economic and social roots* (2006), pp. 3-5.

⁵³⁶ According to figures provided by the State Agency for Refugees (Bulgaria), as of January 2014, approximately 9500 immigrants from the Middle East have settled in Bulgaria, with 4678 of them based in specially designed refugee camps. The single largest concentration of refugees is in the city of Harmanli. (Bibinovska, Borislava. *Близо 9500 бежанци живеят у нас*/Close to 9500 refugees are currently residing in Bulgaria, 2014).

⁵³⁷ *Mediapool newspaper*. *Институциите търсят начини да ограничат бежанския поток към България* (The main Bulgarian institutional actors are seeking ways of limiting the flow of refugees from Syria), 25 October 2013.

2: Romania

2.1 Introduction

Romania is a country which falls between the geographical regions of southeastern and Central Europe. Since the country's founding in 1859, its borders have changed substantially, and they remain in dispute by nationalists in Romania and neighboring countries. Most importantly, Transylvania was acquired from Hungary after World War I and lost temporarily to Hungary in WWII, while Bessarabia was annexed by the USSR after World War II to become the main constituent part of the Moldavian SSR, now Moldova. Together with its southern neighbour Bulgaria Romania successfully acceded to the European Union in 2007, evading the threat of postponement contained in the safeguard clause for the country and thus completing a long journey towards membership. This state has been plagued by some tensions in the realm of inter-ethnic relations, in part attributable to the violent transition from communism, and national-populist factions within the country have frequently occupied the spotlight.

2.2 Romanian nationalism

As in Germany, Romanian literature in the 19th century has been blamed for paving the way for the birth of the ideological radicalism typifying the years between the two world wars.⁵³⁸ During the 18th and 19th centuries, the Romanian national movements consolidated the meaning of the nation as ethnic, bestowing citizenship based on a common culture, a common history and a common language. The Romanian national doctrine of "Greater

Romania” was reiterated on numerous occasions – in 1821, 1878, 1918 (“*România Mare*”), 1941 (“Fourth National Doctrine”) and in 1948 (“National Programme for fostering Socialism”).⁵³⁹ In this regard, the struggle to unify the three historical provinces of Moldavia, Wallachia and Transylvania has represented an overarching motif and a common bond between the different generations of Romanians.⁵⁴⁰ Since the formation of the Romanian nation-state in 1859, Romanian laws were largely premised on the *jus sanguinis* principle when it came to the opportunities granted to non-Romanians for acquiring citizenship. This strong emphasis on the ethnic roots of the Romanian nation in part contributed to the flourishing of less tolerant attitudes towards minority groups or “internal outsiders”. For instance, scholars generally agree that over the course of the early 20th century the four primary strains of anti-Semitism (religious, racial, economic and political) were more pronounced in Romania than in neighboring countries like Bulgaria or Serbia.⁵⁴¹ In this regard, while the evidence suggests that Bulgarian Jews were frequently depicted as members of a religious minority and did not have to contend with deeply ingrained anti-Semitism,⁵⁴² in Romania Jews were to a large extent conceptualized as an ethnic minority (a potentially much more exclusionary category) and did not undergo significant assimilation.⁵⁴³ The communist years did not usher in any significant changes, with the 1971 “Law on Romanian Citizenship” preserving the importance of blood and common descent.⁵⁴⁴ In short, there has been a remarkable durability and continuity to the definition of what constitutes a Romanian, from

⁵³⁸ Znepolski, Ivaylo. *Тоталитаризмите на 20-ти век – сравнителни анализи (The totalitarianisms of the 20th Century – Comparative Perspectives)* (2010), p. 158.

⁵³⁹ Zagorov, Orlin. *България в Европа на нациите (Bulgaria in Europe of the Nations)* (2009), p. 88.

⁵⁴⁰ Tanasoiu, Cosmina. Post-Communist Political Symbolism: New Myths – Same Old Stories? An Analysis of Romanian Political Mythology (2005), p. 124.

⁵⁴¹ Brustein, William I. and Ryan D. King. *Balkan Anti-Semitism: The Causes of Bulgaria and Romania before the Holocaust* (2004), pp. 452-454.

⁵⁴² Behar, Nansen. *Глобализация и Анти-Семитизъм (Globalization and Anti-Semitism)* (2004), p. 134.

⁵⁴³ Brustein, William I. and Ryan D. King. *Balkan Anti-Semitism: The Causes of Bulgaria and Romania before the Holocaust* (2004), p. 441.

⁵⁴⁴ Iordachi, Constantin. Dual Citizenship and Policies toward Kin minorities in East-Central Europe: A Comparison between Hungary, Romania and the Republic of Moldova (2004), pp. 244-245.

the interwar period to the communist one, with an ethnic understanding remaining at the forefront⁵⁴⁵ and little support for civic ideas of national identity.⁵⁴⁶

In addition, it has been claimed that Romania's particular geographical location – it is a culturally Latin nation (with its Roman roots being referred to in historiographies) that is largely surrounded by Slavic states, has perpetuated an insular mentality and triggered an obsession with the language component of Romanian identity.⁵⁴⁷

During the early years of communist rule, a minority of communist representatives like Lucretiu Patrașcanu were eager to implement staunchly nationalistic policies, intending to pursue “national uniformization”, but it was overruled by anti-nationalist party members.⁵⁴⁸ Especially during the 1950s, national minority rights were well-respected, with the Hungarian minority being granted its own autonomous region, in which Târgu Mureș was the main city.⁵⁴⁹ The 1960s saw a shift in the direction of “Romanianization” with minority cultural spaces gradually being shut down: for example, serious restrictions were imposed on the teaching of Hungarian.⁵⁵⁰ Aggressive nationalist posturing reached more cataclysmic proportions in the mid to late 1980s, which marked the last years of the Ceaușescu reign. Revisionism in Romanian historiography became rampant, with the historical links between Transylvania and the Romanian core being overemphasized, coupled with a vitriolic rhetoric aimed at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.⁵⁵¹ While some elements of Pan-Slavism

⁵⁴⁵ Korkut, Umut. *Nationalism versus Internationalism: The Roles of Political and Cultural Elites in Interwar and Communist Romania* (2006), p. 131.

⁵⁴⁶ Chiriot, Daniel. “Social Change in Communist Romania” (2001), p. 198 (citing Rady and Chen)

⁵⁴⁷ Tanasoiu, Cosmina. *Post-Communist Political Symbolism: New Myths – Same Old Stories? An Analysis of Romanian Political Mythology* (2005), p. 120.

⁵⁴⁸ Manchev, Krastyo. *История на Балканските Народи – Том 4 (A History of the Balkan People – Volume 4)* (2006), p. 318.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 318.

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 319-320.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 320-322.

entered Romanian academia in the 1950s,⁵⁵² it needs to be noted that Leninism never developed as strong a following in Romania as in other Eastern European countries, to a degree because of its association with Russia, a country that was not regarded as a positive influence by the majority of Romanians.⁵⁵³ Most historians subscribe to the version that a Marxist regime is unlikely to have taken root in Romania without the credible show of force of the Red Army looming in the background.⁵⁵⁴ Political Anti-Semitism in Romania was in part an outgrowth of concerns pertaining to Soviet Russian irredentism and the perceived Jewish influence within Romanian left-leaning parties.⁵⁵⁵ In the early 1920s, the Romanian Communist party endorsed the Soviet Union's claim as the "rightful proprietor" of the province of Bessarabia in accordance with the self-determination principle, which contributed to a plummeting of the party's legitimacy – membership figures did not exceed 2000 people throughout the interwar period.⁵⁵⁶ Thus, the Romanian communist leadership is seen to have lacked the political astuteness and sophistication of its counterparts from other Eastern European countries and was even less successful than them in convincing the majority of the population to be proactive in paying lip service to Soviet ideology.⁵⁵⁷ Genuine popular support for the Communist Party remained quite low in the post-1945 years.⁵⁵⁸ Verdery maintains that the unique (for Eastern European standards) "symbolic-ideological mode of control" adopted during the Ceaușescu years eventually created potent nationalist discourses

⁵⁵² Баева, Искра. *Източна Европа през XX век. Идеи, конфликти, митове* (Eastern Europe in the 20th century. *Ideas, Conflicts, Myths*) (2010), p. 237.

⁵⁵³ Korkut, Umut. Nationalism versus Internationalism: The Roles of Political and Cultural Elites in Interwar and Communist Romania (2006), p. 141.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁵ Brustein, William I. and Ryan D. King. *Balkan Anti-Semitism: The Causes of Bulgaria and Romania before the Holocaust* (2004), p. 448.

⁵⁵⁶ Cârstocea, Raul. *Standing on the threshold of a new world: the rhetoric of crisis and renewal of the "Legion of the Archangel Michael", Romania's interwar fascist movement* (2013).

⁵⁵⁷ Chen, Cheng. *The Roots of Illiberal Nationalism in Romania: A Historical Institutional Analysis of the Leninist Legacy* (2003), pp. 175-176.

⁵⁵⁸ Chirot, Daniel. *Social Change in Communist Romania* (2001), p. 460.

that actually undermined the credentials of Leninism.⁵⁵⁹ In essence, in Romania Communism merged with nationalism (with the expression of patriotic sentiments monopolized by the regime) to an impressive degree, especially compared to most other Central and Eastern European countries.⁵⁶⁰

The tone of discussions regarding Europeanism in Romania has inevitably been affected by the relatively negative social representation of modernization in Romanian history. In the late 19th century, the conservative group *Junimea* (youth) rallied against “imported Western institutions”, dismissing them as constituting “forms without content”.⁵⁶¹ In the first half of the twentieth century, Nicolae Iorga, the influential Romanian intellectual and politician, as well as his follower Nae Ionescu, were skeptical of the adoption of modern political institutions in Romania and regarded them as incompatible with Romanian traditional society.⁵⁶² Ionescu unabashedly condemned “Westernization”, while those like Iorga were more measured in their attitudes, affirming the need not to downplay the potential of domestic institutions. His dislike of the 1866 Romanian constitution (which significantly reduced the rights enjoyed by peasants in Romania) stemmed from his idealization of the “peasant society” and the fact that he conceptualized it as a borrowed model that “was made by an excellent tailor, used, however, to cut clothes for different bodies than ours [those belonging to the Romanians].⁵⁶³

The theme of modernization as representing a “denial of the Romanian self” was taken up by “New Generation” students following in the footsteps of Ionescu.⁵⁶⁴ Even some intellectuals like Emil Cioran who saw sticking to anti-modernism as a self-defeating

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 190 (citing Katherine Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceaușescu's Romania*, 1991, p. 99).

⁵⁶⁰ Kuzio, Taras. Comparative perspectives on Communist successor parties in Central-Eastern Europe and Eurasia (2008), p. 403.

⁵⁶¹ Mungiu-Pippidi, Alina. *Hijacked Modernization: Romanian Political Culture in the 20th century* (2007), pp. 122-123.

⁵⁶² Ibid, p. 123.

⁵⁶³ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid, pp. 125-126.

endeavour depicted modernization in somewhat negative terms, for instance characterizing it as a “necessary rape” that would force the Romanian nation “into transformation”.⁵⁶⁵ In this period both nationalists and pro-Westerners saw Orthodox Christianity as inseparably linked to issues of modernization, regarding it as intrinsically at loggerheads with the adoption of modern innovations.⁵⁶⁶

However, despite the tendency to at times combine the negative stigma attached to modernization with a rejection of the West, positive Western frames of reference (especially in terms of the country’s Latin heritage) are far from absent in Romanian discourses. By the late 18th century, Latinism (due to the language and cultural links) had assumed popularity among the Romanian intelligentsia and self-identifying as Latin began to be regarded as honourable.⁵⁶⁷ The Latin (culturally Western) frame of reference also tied in nicely with the ethnic nationalist understandings of the nation (due to the premium placed on the unique Daco-Roman heritage of the Romanians) and provided ammunition for the distancing from historical rivals like the Slavs and the Magyars assumed to belong to non-Western civilizations. In the early years of the 19th century, Romania and France strengthened their ties, with quite a few Romanian students pursuing their studies at French universities.⁵⁶⁸ During the Ceaușescu years, the Dacian roots of the Romanians tended to be extolled at the expense of the Roman ones, but in the 1990s, following the collapse of the communist regime, the Roman (Latin) component of Romanian identity gained traction once again, for instance when it came to tourism promotion efforts.⁵⁶⁹ This shift in nationalist discourses was to a degree reflective of a concerted strategy to tout the Western pedigree of Romania, so that the country could receive economic aid and position itself firmly within the European

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 127.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 128.

⁵⁶⁷ Buchanan, Donna A. *Balkan Popular Culture and the Ottoman Ecumene – Music, Image and Regional Political Discourse* (2007), p. 98.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 99.

⁵⁶⁹ Hall D., M. Smith and B. Marciszweska. *The Next Enlargement* (2006), pp. 263-264.

(Western) sphere.⁵⁷⁰ The contemporary emphasis on the Western components of Romanian identity arguably represents an attempt to sever the ties with the “destitute East” and counterbalance its (perceived) negative image among Western Europeans.⁵⁷¹

In contrast to its southern neighbour, Bulgaria, the anti-orientalist theme in Romania does not resonate as strongly with large sections of the population and the years under Ottoman domination did not create an intellectual and cultural distancing from the West to the same extent. The territories inhabited mostly by ethnic Romanians (Wallachia and Moldavia) that had accepted the suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire managed to constantly exchange ideas with the Western parts of Europe due to their strong links with Poland, Hungary, and Transylvania.⁵⁷² While Romanian nationalism has not been regarded as intrinsically less hostile to Turkey than the Slavic ones, in the aftermath of its declaration of independence Romania has generally been spared some of the Ottoman-related challenges pertaining to the integration of Muslim minorities that have typified the experiences of the other Balkan countries.⁵⁷³ Turkish influences have nonetheless tended to be treated in a somewhat negative fashion in Romanian historiography (for instance, as evidenced by the depictions of the Orient by prominent early 20th century writer and sociologist Dimitrie Drăghicescu),⁵⁷⁴ with anti-Turkish sentiments quite commonly expressed by Romanian right-wing sympathizers in the interwar years.⁵⁷⁵ The communist period did not bring about significant instances of historical revisionism in relation to the Ottoman legacy. Among contemporary Romanians, however, attitudes towards Turkey are overwhelmingly positive. According to Eurobarometer surveys from 2006 covering the opinions of EU citizens from the 27 EU member states, there are only four EU countries in which the majority of public

⁵⁷⁰ Ditchev, Ivaylo. *The Eros of Identity* (2002) p. 236.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

⁵⁷² Mantran, Robert. *Histoire de l'Empire ottoman (History of the Ottoman Empire)* (2012), p. 322.

⁵⁷³ Irwin, Zachary T. *The Fate of Islam in the Balkans: a Comparison of Four State Policies* (1989), pp. 402-403.

⁵⁷⁴ Boia, Lucian. *History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness* (2001), pp. 158-159.

opinion is supportive of Turkey's EU accession. Romania comes in first place, with 78.3 % of Romanians expressing approval of Turkey's potential membership.⁵⁷⁶

At the party level, since the early 1990s, the different nationalist discourses of “reformists” and “traditionalists” have been pitted against each other.⁵⁷⁷ Reformists have tended to wed nationalist discourses to European themes. For instance, Traian Băsescu has drawn comparisons between the creation of a “Greater Romania” and the “uplifting times” and “positive changes” attributed to EU accession. References to Romania's cultural commonalities with Europe abound when it comes to the nationalist palette of the “reformists”. On the other hand, “traditional” nationalists like Tudor are generally reluctant to manufacture feelings of common history between Romania and Europe, emphasizing a very nation-bounded identity. In addition, creating opposing dyads in relation to minorities, i.e. by invoking negative self-identifications with groups like Hungarians, is an inherent feature of their type of nationalist expression.⁵⁷⁸

2.3 Parties and Europeanization in the aftermath of the communist collapse

The late Ceaușescu years had the effect of largely extinguishing the memory of Romania as the most Western-oriented Warsaw Pact member during the late 1960s and the 1970s.⁵⁷⁹ The thawing of relations between the USSR and the West in the 1980s also diminished Romania's role of interlocutor between the two blocs, which may have

⁵⁷⁵ Ioanid, Radu. *The Holocaust in Romania: the destruction of Jews and Gypsies under the Antonescu regime, 1940-1944* (2000), p. 225.

⁵⁷⁶ Gerhards, Jürgen and Silke Hans. *Why not Turkey? Attitudes towards Turkish Membership in the EU among Citizens in 27 European Countries* (2011), pp. 745-746.

⁵⁷⁷ Billstroem, Mikaela. *Nationalism and National Identity in Romania* (2008), p. 29.

⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 33-34.

⁵⁷⁹ Angelescu, Irina. *Punching Below its Weight? Europeanization and Romanian Foreign Policy* (2011), pp. 9-10.

contributed to Ceaușescu's increasingly bellicose behaviour, e.g. in relation to the Hungarians.⁵⁸⁰ Transitologists like John Higley also assert that the violence surrounding the change of regime in Romania in 1989 inevitably affected the course of the transition towards democracy, mostly in a negative fashion.⁵⁸¹ Political parties in Romania were gauged to have faced serious difficulties in bringing about the creation of a solid democracy.

“Rather than converging around clearly defined doctrines and programs of action, [Romanian political parties] were “centred around a few prominent personalities and disproportionately focused their attention to the domestic infighting.”⁵⁸²

In the 1990s civil society remained quite weak, perhaps not only due to the Communist legacy, but also because of Romania's lack of historic precedents of democracy, as opposed to other CEE states like the Czech Republic.⁵⁸³ In addition, missing the first train towards EU accession by not being given the green light for the 2004 “big bang” enlargement is deemed to have sent some shock waves through Romanian society, prompting the population to extend support to the radically nationalist Greater Romania party, which eventually came second in the 2000 Presidential elections.⁵⁸⁴ The PRM was formed in 1991 and combined a strongly nationalist orientation with a degree of nostalgia for the communist era (see Appendix 2 for additional details). Nonetheless, while the Romanian elites were ambiguously disposed towards EU membership in the initial post-communist years, the vast majority of the population was very favorable towards the possibility of accession to the Union. Surveys carried out in 1995 revealed that 97 % of Romanians were willing to embrace membership in the EU, the highest figure in Europe at the time, and similar levels of support persisted

⁵⁸⁰ Gallagher, Tom. *Theft of a Nation – Romania since Communism* (2005), p. 64.

⁵⁸¹ Higley, John and J. Pakulski. *Revolution and elite transformation in Eastern Europe* (1992), pp. 8-10.

⁵⁸² Ibid, pp. 6-7 (citing Steven D. Roper. *Romania: The Unfinished Revolution*, 2000, p. 109).

⁵⁸³ Ibid, pp. 8-9.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 8.

throughout the 2000s, the electoral success of populist parties like Greater Romania notwithstanding.⁵⁸⁵

In the pre-accession period, Romanians were characterized as more likely to be receptive to Western models and “best practices” than the Bulgarians, both on the elite and the popular levels, with the latter more inclined to succumb to EU-nihilism.⁵⁸⁶ The pre-accession period in Romania did not feature any thorough debates focusing on the merits of the decision to join the European Union, with almost unconditional support offered by civil society and the elites.⁵⁸⁷ The Romanian Orthodox Church, despite some reservations pertaining to the perceived inability of the EU to treat Romania as an equal, has also been generally supportive of the integration path pursued, maintaining that courtesy of Romania the EU would get proper exposure to the “real” (Orthodox) Europe.⁵⁸⁸ Romanian elites have also tended to refrain from adopting a defensive posture in relation to the EU in their electoral manifestos. There has been only limited talk of a “Romanian national model” that could be threatened by European integration.⁵⁸⁹ With regard to the passing of reforms to bring the country closer to EU membership, Romania is judged to have been a relatively “reluctant transformer”. However, it was also quite reactive to EU conditionality, expediently taking action to reform when put on the spot by the EU institutions.⁵⁹⁰ Still, there has been a post-accession downturn in Euroenthusiasm in Romania, attributable to the loss of potency of the symbolic appeal of the EU and disappointed economic expectations. In addition, decreased attachment to the European frame is attributable to the perception of a reduction in the

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 12.

⁵⁸⁶ Nenovsky, Nikolay, Kiril Tochkov and Camelia Turcu. *From Prosperity to Depression: Bulgaria and Romania (1996/97-2010)* (2011), p. 12.

⁵⁸⁷ Turcescu, Lucian and Lavinia Stam. *Orthodoxy and EU Integration: Opportunity or Stumbling Block?* (2010), p. 11.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid, pp. 12-13.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 246.

⁵⁹⁰ Zamfir, Catalin. *The Political Process of the Romanian Transition – a Structural Explanation* (2004), p. 13.

efficiency of the political institutions in Romania in the aftermath of membership.⁵⁹¹ While the 2005-2008 timeframe in Romania saw a relative abatement in activity among hardcore nationalists, the strong showing of the PRM at the 2009 elections is thought to have brought about a new “nationalization” of political discourses in the country and renewed the appeal of populism as a political tool.⁵⁹²

2.4 Ethnic harmony issues in Romania

As alluded to previously, the region of Transylvania, which is inhabited by many Hungarians, has often been at the forefront of issues pertaining to nationalist and ethnoregionalist policies. Settled minorities in Romania have tended to congregate in specific regions and constitute “compact masses” - Banat is another such example with its ethnic composition having been largely made up of Romani people and ethnic Germans.⁵⁹³ In the period prior to the outbreak of the Second World War Romanian fascist parties like the Iron Guard are assessed to have exhibited a level of anti-Semitism almost comparable to that of the actual Nazi party in Germany and unleashed pogroms on the Jewish population.⁵⁹⁴ In relation to the Hungarians, there is also a legacy of violence (albeit to a lesser extent), tied to the years of WWII – on 12 September 1944, the Hungarian administration in Transylvania was replaced by a Romanian one and Romanian nationalist factions like the *Avram Ianku Haiduts* were implicated in the mass killings of ethnic Hungarians.⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁹¹ Turcanu, Florin. *National and Right-wing Radicalism in the New Democracies: Romania* (2011), p. 2.

⁵⁹² Ibid.

⁵⁹³ Manchev, Krastyo. *История на Балканските Народи – Том 4 (A History of the Balkan People – Volume 4)* (2006), p. 317.

⁵⁹⁴ Brustein, William I. and Ryan D. King. *Balkan Anti-Semitism: The Causes of Bulgaria and Romania before the Holocaust* (2004), p. 432.

⁵⁹⁵ Manchev, Krastyo. *История на Балканските Народи – Том 4 (A History of the Balkan People – Volume 4)* (2006), p. 318.

While Romanian foreign policy in the 1990s was universally regarded as “moderate”, centrist and leftist Romanian parties have generally refrained from criticizing Romanian factions that display a willingness to take pot shots at the Hungarian minority and encourage the reawakening of “Greater Romania” discourses.⁵⁹⁶ In the 1990s, the post-communist government and more nationalistically inclined opposition parties frequently held similar views when it came to the “Hungarian question” and militarist doctrine.⁵⁹⁷ In the pioneering stages of the negotiations with the EU, especially during the Văcăroiu administration (1992-1996), Romania also displayed marked reluctance to acknowledge the link between its treatment of ethnic minorities and its membership in the supranational community, frequently asserting that ethnic minority measures that affected those residing in Romania were solely the prerogative of the nation-state and could not be subject to the judgments of an external arbiter.⁵⁹⁸

The first important step towards minority rights in post-communist Romania was a constitutional guarantee in 1991 of a seat in parliament for all national minorities. A Council for National Minorities was established in 1993 as an advisory body to the government. It consisted of representatives of ethnic minority organizations and had the aim of monitoring the observance of minority rights. Kettley has stressed that the first Romanian Constitution after the changes from communism had a number of disputed points – the stress on sovereignty based on the unity of the Romanian people (ethnic definition of the community) and mono-lingualism served to alienate the Hungarian political elites within the country.⁵⁹⁹ As the first Romanian governments were closely aligned with nationalist parties, breakthroughs in the granting of cultural and territorial autonomy to Hungarians only started

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 323.

⁵⁹⁷ Niessen, James P. *Romanian Nationalism: an Ideology of Integration and Mobilization* (1995), p. 297.

⁵⁹⁸ Angelescu, Irina. *Punching Below its Weight? Europeanization and Romanian Foreign Policy* (2011), pp. 14-15.

to happen after the 1996 general elections when a Hungarian minority party – the Democratic Union of Hungarians from Romania (DUHR) – joined a government coalition.⁶⁰⁰

Local level obstacles have often persisted in negatively affecting legislation relevant to the needs of Hungarians.⁶⁰¹ The Hungarian minority in Romania is concentrated in specific territories, so local governance structures have been identified as key when it comes to promoting Hungarian rights.⁶⁰² Sharply voiced concerns on the part of majority actors due to the possibility of “fragmentation of state sovereignty” have frequently accompanied Hungarian demands for institutional autonomy.⁶⁰³ During the 1990s, most minority parties in Romania have been characterized as single issue ones due to promoting almost exclusively minority interests.⁶⁰⁴ Discourses touching upon Romanian centralization have been associated with an ethnic Romanian definition of the state. Romanian nationalists tended to emphasize the need for “hard centralization” as a safety valve against Hungarian challenges to the territorial integrity of the state. On the other hand, Romanian and Hungarian moderates were more likely to prioritize “civic regionalism” and pressure for the creation of trans-ethnic parties in regions like Transylvania.⁶⁰⁵ In 1995 Romanian nationalists demanded that DUHR be declared an illegal organization. (DUHR had established the Council of Hungarian Mayors and local councillors, which was seen as an initiative to bring about the declaration of ethno-territorial autonomy for Hungarians).⁶⁰⁶

⁵⁹⁹ Dragoman, Dragoş. *Ethnic Groups in Symbolic Conflict. The “Ethnicization” of Public Space in Romania* (2011), p. 117 (citing Carmen Kettley. *Ethnicity, Language and Transition Politics in Romania: The Hungarian Minority in Context*, 2003, pp. 246-250).

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 182.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid, p. 186.

⁶⁰² Medianu, Narcisa. *Analysing Political Exchanges between Minority and Majority Leaders in Romania* (2002), p. 36.

⁶⁰³ Rechel, Bernd. *Minority Rights in Central and Eastern Europe* (2009), p. 184.

⁶⁰⁴ Mihaş, D. E. M. *Romania between Balkan Nationalism and Democratic Transition* (1997), p. 180.

⁶⁰⁵ Dragoman, Dragoş. *Ethnic Groups in Symbolic Conflict. The “Ethnicization” of Public Space in Romania* (2011), pp. 112-113.

⁶⁰⁶ Medianu, Narcisa. *Analysing Political Exchanges between Minority and Majority Leaders in Romania* (2002), p. 34.

On a more optimistic note, in the early 2000s, Romania had already made huge strides in the adoption of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation⁶⁰⁷ and in addition it has tended to faithfully heed EU suggestions pertaining to the improvement of the plight of the Roma.⁶⁰⁸ Since the mid 1990s, the mainstream Romanian parties and the Romanian elites have tended to take a *laissez-faire* approach with regard to the use of the Hungarian language in regions with a high concentration of ethnic Hungarians, in stark contrast to the attitudes towards minority languages displayed by their counterparts in Slovakia and Estonia.⁶⁰⁹

It is also notable that ethnoregionalist parties, representing the interests of the Hungarian community, have also been rather prone to aggressive activism (arguably much more so than their Turkish counterparts in Bulgaria if one is to compare across countries) on the EU plane. After the collapse of the communist system, the Hungarians were actually the first to establish a political party in Romania (in December 1989) and the DUHR has been regarded as one of the most stable and resourceful ethnoregionalist parties in the CEE region.⁶¹⁰ Based on Rudolph and Thompson's 1985 classifications, Zariski provides a confirmation regarding the high degree of assertiveness displayed by DUHR – drawing on their distinctions between “ethnoterritorial movements” he depicts the Bulgarian MRF as an “output-oriented” (moderate) party, while the DUHR is labeled as “anti-authority” (thus falling within a more extreme category).⁶¹¹ Arguably, one contributing factor to the tendency of the Hungarians in Romania to be more outward looking was their especially close and amicable relationship with their kin state (or more accurately their external national

⁶⁰⁷ Mihaş, D. E. M. Romania between Balkan Nationalism and Democratic Transition (1997), p. 185.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 188.

⁶⁰⁹ Csergo, Zsuzsa. Minority political integration in the framework of transnational integration: Lessons from new European Democracies (2013).

⁶¹⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹¹ Johnson, Carter. Democratic Transition in the Balkans: Romania's Hungarian and Bulgaria's Turkish Minority (2002), p. 15 (citing R. Zariski. Ethnic Extremism among Ethnoterritorial Minorities in Western Europe: Dimensions, Causes, and Institutional Responses, 1989, p. 261).

“homeland”, to borrow Brubaker’s terminology) Hungary.⁶¹² In addition, since the 1990s they have been quite attentive to developments in Hungary, as the Hungarian economy consistently performed better than the Romanian one, while the same did not apply to Turks in Bulgaria, as there was no sharp divergence between the level of economic development of Bulgaria and Turkey.⁶¹³ The relative legitimacy of the outward looking faction within DUHR (led by László Tőkés) compared with the inward looking one gradually increased (it made sense to consider connecting Transylvania separately with the Hungarian economy) throughout the 1990s and early 2000s,⁶¹⁴ but this had the unfortunate effect of compromising the efficiency of DUHR’s cooperation with mainstream parties in Romania.⁶¹⁵

Official level discourses on immigrants in Romania post-1989 have been characterized by an avoidance of the key issues (no serious attention has been dedicated to the existence of immigration flows in Romania), while on the popular level there has been a tendency to impute a criminal identity on foreign settlers,⁶¹⁶ with the media focusing on the negative aspects of immigration flows.⁶¹⁷ Nonetheless, in recent years (2007-2009) Romania has been one of the countries that have approved refugee and asylum applications at a much higher rate than most other Eastern European states.⁶¹⁸

⁶¹² Brubaker, Rogers. *National Minorities, Nationalizing States, and External National Homelands in the New Europe* (1995), pp. 109-110.

⁶¹³ Roger, Antoine. *The Influence of the European Union on Political Orientations of Ethnic Minorities: Comparing Post-Communist Bulgaria and Romania* (2002), p. 145.

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

⁶¹⁵ Roger, Antoine. *Economic Development and the Positioning of Ethnic Political Parties: Comparing Post-Communist Bulgaria and Romania* (2002), pp. 31-32.

⁶¹⁶ Wundrak, Rixta. *Emerging transnational migrant networks in Eastern Europe: the Chinese community in Bucharest post-1989* (2009), pp. 203-204.

⁶¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

⁶¹⁸ Hamberger, Astrid. *Immigration and the Integration of Immigrants in Romania* (2010), p. 3.

3: Netherlands

3.1 Introduction

One of the founding Six members of the EU, the Netherlands has long been among the most influential countries within the Union and its system of governance and policy styles have been deemed a natural fit with those of the supranational community. Since the 1990s, there has been a temporal overlap between the increased questioning of the multicultural model within the Netherlands and the rise in Eurosceptic sentiments as well as the redefinitions of discourses pertaining to the EU. The recent successful showings of populists have continued to cast doubts on the accuracy of the “model Europeanizer” label attached to the Netherlands.

3.2 Dutch nationalism

The process of formation of a single Dutch nation has been traced to the 12th century, with the enduring wars against the Spanish kingdom in the early to mid 17th century creating a number of complications and enhancing the divisions between two halves of the Netherlands, based on religious affiliation: Protestantism (Calvinism) characterizing the northern parts and Catholicism typifying the southern Netherlands, which remained tightly in Spain’s grip (and in 1713 fell under Austrian control).⁶¹⁹ Religion has been identified as the most important single factor when it came to the historical processes shaping the creation of a Dutch nation, though economic aspects are not to be downplayed.⁶²⁰ Dutch national consciousness and nationalism have been regarded as being closely connected to the

⁶¹⁹ Hastings, Adrian. *The Construction of Nationhood – ethnicity, religion and nationalism* (1997), pp. 64-65.

Protestant identity, even if one is to assume that there was a degree of distinctiveness to the northern Netherlands prior to the Reformation processes.⁶²¹ In the 1880s, the liberals in the Netherlands played their part in increasing national sentiment by emphasizing the House of Orange and the institution of the monarchy as unifying symbols that would reduce the faultlines between those belonging to different religious traditions.⁶²² The turn of the 20th century saw popular nationalism within the Netherlands reach its zenith, in part bolstered by the Boer War (1899-1902), which resulted in the springing up of various cultural revival societies for the preservation of the Dutch language and “national character”.⁶²³ However, the lack of decisive support offered by the Dutch government to the Boers eventually contributed to the sinking in of the realization that the Netherlands was essentially a small state and reduced patriotic fervour. Unlike other countries involved in the Great War (such as Germany and France), Dutch nationalism is thought to have “peaked too early” and is assessed not to have undergone a jingoist phase – for instance, it has lacked the craving for expansionary wars.⁶²⁴ One of the viewpoints still popular to this day is that the Second World War experiences did not significantly alter the nature of the nationalist trajectory within the Netherlands.⁶²⁵

In addition to the historically rooted religious cleavages, Dutch society is significantly divided by class cleavages. The opposition between the middle and lower classes in the Netherlands has been characterized as being more potent and historically entrenched than in

⁶²⁰ Hastings, Adrian. *The Construction of Nationhood – ethnicity, religion and nationalism* (1997), p. 66.

⁶²¹ Ibid, p. 190.

⁶²² De Jong, Adriaan. *Die Dirigenten der Erinnerung: Musealisierung und Nationalisierung der Volkskultur in den Niederlanden 1815-1940 (The dirigents of remembrance: Musealization and Nationalization of Dutch traditional culture)* (2007), p. 36.

⁶²³ Ibid.

⁶²⁴ Wielenga, Friso. *Die Niederlande – Politik und politische Kultur im 20. Jahrhundert (The Netherlands – Politics and Political Culture in the 20th century)* (2008), p. 76.

⁶²⁵ Kroon, Sjaak and Jan Sturm. *Das nationale Selbstverständnis im Unterricht der Nationalsprache: Der Fall der Niederlande. Eine Vorstudie. (The national self-understanding when it comes to mother tongue instruction: the case of the Netherlands. A Preliminary Analysis)* (1994), pp. 166-167.

the majority of the other European countries. The Dutch *bourgeoisie* is assumed to have become the most powerful social group in the country as early as the foundation of the Netherlands Republic in the early 17th century (rather than since the apex of the Industrial Revolution).⁶²⁶

The formation of the Dutch nation-state has been labeled as a demotic or elite-driven process due to the pervasive role of national elites and the relatively limited influence of mass movements.⁶²⁷ The Constitution of 1848, which was largely modeled after Thorbecke, guaranteed many liberties such as freedom of religion and educational opportunities.⁶²⁸ Another significant development – consociationalism, also dubbed as *verzuiling* or pillarization in the Dutch context, was an outgrowth of the 1917 Constitution and is deemed to have officially persisted until 1967.⁶²⁹ The process of pillarization essentially strengthened and provided a permanent seal to the segmentation of Dutch society in compartments consisting of Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Socialists/Liberals.⁶³⁰ The mid 1960s are generally acknowledged as the cut-off point, which marked the serious decline of pillarization, attributable to processes like modernization and a growth of public activism bypassing the elite level. The elites within the pillars had been the ones in charge when it came to the negotiations of general policies applicable to the Dutch state.⁶³¹ This decline of these socio-religious cleavages within Dutch society in the late 1960s is seen to have removed the last obstacles for the ushering in of tolerance and pragmatism as the hallmarks

⁶²⁶ Lijphart, Arend. *The Politics of Accommodation – Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands* (1975), p. 19.

⁶²⁷ Smith, Anthony D. *An Ethnosymbolic Account of Nations and Nationalism* (2000), p. 68.

⁶²⁸ Knippenberg, Hans. *State formation and nation-building in the Netherlands and the Soviet Union: a historical comparison* (1996), pp. 251-252.

⁶²⁹ Lustick, Ian. Lijphart, Lakatos, and Consociationalism (1997), pp. 96-97.

⁶³⁰ Knippenberg, Hans. *State formation and nation-building in the Netherlands and the Soviet Union: a historical comparison* (1996), p. 254.

⁶³¹ Van Mierlo, Hans J.G.A. *Depillarisation and the Decline of consociationalism in the Netherlands: 1970-1985* (1986), pp. 101-103.

of Dutch national identity.⁶³² Furthermore, Naziesque parties with an essentialist understanding of Dutch ethnicity never achieved any substantial popularity in the Netherlands and went through many splinterings and mergers;⁶³³ consequently, the post-WWII era also gradually saw the entrenchment of the civic conception of Dutch citizenship. While the Dutch Nationality Act of 1892 was mainly based on the *jus sanguinis* principle, so that immigrants could only obtain Dutch citizenship through naturalization, in 1953, all immigrant children of third generation residents became automatically entitled to citizenship.⁶³⁴

As for Europeanism and Dutch identity, it would be perhaps fair to say that the perception of a natural fit between the Dutch and European identities has not always been part of the common consciousness. Up until the early 1940s, the Dutch general public's interest in foreign policy was less pronounced in comparison to that in many other European countries. The idea of "European unity of thought" did not really resonate with large segments of Dutch society. For instance, there was little debate generated by and few conferences were organized to discuss *Pan-Europe* (1923) by Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi (an Austrian pioneer of European integration) and the Dutch politicians from the country's foreign ministry that he tried to enlist in order to "spread the message" rarely gave him the time of day and displayed scepticism regarding his vision of a Common European Customs Union.⁶³⁵ However, by the end of the Second World War massive enthusiasm for the idea of European integration started to develop. Societal groups and unofficial think tanks like European Action assessed European federalism as a harbinger of true freedom and regarded it as an alternative way for the national community to rejuvenate (something which could not

⁶³² Smoor, Lodewijk. *The Benelux and Scandinavia in the EU – explaining EU-skepticism with national identity and political culture* (2006), p. 58.

⁶³³ Arblaster, Paul. *A History of the Low Countries* (2006), p. 272.

⁶³⁴ Groenendijk, Kees and Eric Heijts. *Immigration, Immigrants and Nationality Law in the Netherlands, 1945-1998* (2001), p. 145.

really be achieved within the confines of the nation-state).⁶³⁶ The European federalism movement in the Netherlands became more prominent in 1948 and its key policy programmes emphasized cultural unity, the need to find a solution to the problematic interactions between large and small states within Europe and the benefits of European economic cooperation.⁶³⁷ Conceptualizations of European unity within the Netherlands also tended to go hand in hand with support for the notion of a “common humanity united within one world state”.⁶³⁸ European integration tended to be associated with the creation of a new order within Europe that would contribute to strengthening the importance of international law.⁶³⁹ It has been claimed that the Second World War dispelled the illusions that the Netherlands was a “Middle Power” that could be in a position to maintain its neutrality and successfully pursue its national interests within the current international order.⁶⁴⁰

Cold War dynamics also contributed towards reorienting Dutch policy from the premium placed on narrow concerns (such as the Indonesian question) to embracing discussions focusing on European cooperation.⁶⁴¹ In the aftermath of the Second World War, despite the overtly pro-European unity shift in Dutch foreign policy, there were concerns among members of Dutch governments regarding the political and military repercussions arising out of European unity (the significant economic benefits notwithstanding).⁶⁴² Two main Dutch schools of thought were prominent at the time. The first one regarded the Netherlands as a maritime country that “should not be bottled up [through the EU] with countries having a more continental background”. The second one emphasized that from the standpoint of Dutch national interests it was desirable to retain a balance between its

⁶³⁵ Manning, Adrian F. *Die Niederlande und Europa von 1945 bis zum Beginn der fünfziger Jahre* (*The Netherlands and Europe from 1945 until the beginning of the 1950s*) (1981), p. 4.

⁶³⁶ Ibid, p. 8.

⁶³⁷ Ibid.

⁶³⁸ Ibid, p. 9.

⁶³⁹ Ibid, p. 4.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 19.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid.

⁶⁴² Heldring, Jerome L. *Rhetoric and Reality in Dutch Foreign Policy* (1978), p. 409.

neighbors and thus there was support for British accession into the Community.⁶⁴³ Until 1948, there was also hope on the part of quite a few Dutch politicians that a European community could serve as a bridge between the United States and the Soviet Union.⁶⁴⁴ Subsequently, the terms “Europe” and “Western Europe” started to be regarded as synonymous within Dutch society, with non-democratic states like Portugal and Spain initially being excluded from the picture.⁶⁴⁵ The emphasis on moralism rather than political pragmatism among Dutch foreign policy-makers in the 1950s has been regarded as conducive to the country’s staunch opposition to Communism and the tendency to label those lacking enthusiasm for European integration as “sinners”.⁶⁴⁶ However, the social revolution of the mid 1960s that manifested itself through a wave of liberalism, as evidenced for example by the rapid abandonment of staunch conservatism within the Dutch Catholic Church, somewhat compromised the legitimacy of Dutch elites and brought about a dwindling of the appeal of European integration (as well as of American foreign policy initiatives) for the members of the younger generations in the Netherlands.⁶⁴⁷ During that period, parties lacking strong religious roots gradually started to become more influential within the Dutch political system.⁶⁴⁸ As summed up by Heldring:

“They [moralism and idealism] had become stronger than before, but no longer projected themselves on anti-communist crusades or European supranationalism, but rather on distant causes such as Vietnam, Southern Africa, Chile, etc.”.⁶⁴⁹

⁶⁴³ Ibid, p. 410.

⁶⁴⁴ Manning, Adrian F. *Die Niederlande und Europa von 1945 bis zum Beginn der fünfziger Jahre* (The Netherlands and Europe from 1945 until the beginning of the 1950s) (1981), p. 10.

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 11.

⁶⁴⁶ Heldring, Jerome L. *Rhetoric and Reality in Dutch Foreign Policy* (1978), p. 411.

⁶⁴⁷ Heldring, Jerome L. *Rhetoric and Reality in Dutch Foreign Policy* (1978), p. 412.

⁶⁴⁸ Arblaster, Paul. *A History of the Low Countries* (2006), p. 285.

⁶⁴⁹ Heldring, Jerome L. *Rhetoric and Reality in Dutch Foreign Policy* (1978), p. 412.

Essentially, the “idealistic” phase (from the perspective of the general public) when it came to European integration in the Netherlands is thought to have persisted between 1950 and 1965.⁶⁵⁰

3.3 Post-Maastricht party system developments

The Netherlands has consistently been regarded as one of the most federalist of the EU member states, implying a willingness to support the deepening of EU integration and a strengthening of the role of the supranational institutions.⁶⁵¹ Its political culture has frequently been lauded for its open-mindedness and receptivity to EU models.⁶⁵² However, it is notable that since the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, the Netherlands, where the intergovernmental negotiations surrounding the treaty were actually held, has seen the largest increase in Euroscepticism among EU countries.⁶⁵³ There has been a widening of the gap between the turnout at national and European elections since 1979, with this disconnect picking up pace in the 1990s.⁶⁵⁴ Eurobarometer surveys indicate that in the mid 1990s only 27 % of Dutch citizens characterized themselves as being “interested in EU politics”.⁶⁵⁵ Party politics in the Netherlands have been depicted as constituting a *par excellence* example of the shift from a “permissive consensus” to a “constraining dissensus”, as the cheerful pro-European tone of EU-related debates gradually gave way to Eurosceptic rhetoric.⁶⁵⁶ The PVV

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 410.

⁶⁵¹ Harmsen, Robert. *The Evolution of Dutch European Discourse – Defining the Limits of Europe* (2008), p. 318.

⁶⁵² Schmidt, Katrin. *Populism and Euroscepticism in the Netherlands – Pim Fortuyn and the Dutch Nee-Campaign against the European Constitutional Treaty* (2006), p. 1.

⁶⁵³ Lubbers, Marcel and Eva Jaspers. *A Longitudinal Study of Euroscepticism in the Netherlands: 2008 versus 1990* (2011), p. 23.

⁶⁵⁴ Dekker, Paul, Albert van der Horst, Paul Koutstaal, Henk Kox, Tom van der Meer, Charlotte Wennekers, Teunis Brosens, Bas Verschoor. *Strategic Europe – Markets and Power in 2030 and public opinion on the European Union* (2009), p. 42.

⁶⁵⁵ Sobisch, Andreas. *Interest In, Knowledge About, And Support for the European Union* (1997), p. 132.

⁶⁵⁶ De Wilde, Pieter. *Reasserting the Nation-state – the trajectory of Euroscepticism in the Netherlands* (2009), pp. 3-4.

which was officially founded by Geert Wilders (a VVD party defector) in 2006 has established itself as the new face of Dutch Euroscepticism and also challenged the role played by traditional conservatives in the Netherlands. In 2009 and 2010, it was at one point the most popularly supported Dutch party according to polling information (for further details see Appendix 2 and Appendix 3). However, it was by no means a pioneer in the transformation of the Dutch political landscape. In the early 2000s, an ideological precursor to the PVV secured an important breakthrough, contributing to the abolition of taboos in political discourses and offering a platform of “new realism” that combined progressive views on sexual minority issues (sexual freedom is sometimes conceptualized as a typically Dutch trope)⁶⁵⁷ with a staunch opposition to immigration in general and Islamization in particular.⁶⁵⁸ On 11 February 2002, Pim Fortuyn, a politician with a prior membership in left-wing groupings who had been expelled from the *Leefbaar Nederland* (LN) party for comments made against Islam, established the *Lijst Pim Fortuyn* (LPF).⁶⁵⁹ Support for the new party skyrocketed in the three months preceding the 2002 Dutch general election and subsequently the LPF obtained 26 seats and 17 % of the vote in the Second Chamber of the Dutch Parliament (Fortuyn was assassinated nine days before election day).⁶⁶⁰ While the LPF’s electoral appeal significantly dwindled following the quick collapse of the coalition government of which it had become part and it was formally disbanded on 1 February 2008, its legacy would prove to be long-lasting compared to previous right-wing players in Dutch politics such as the *Centrum Democraten* (CD).⁶⁶¹ On the level of the wider Dutch society, the charismatic Fortuyn demonstrated that a party whose ideology is very much in line with

⁶⁵⁷ Mepschen, Paul, Jan Willem Duyvendak and Evelien H. Tonkens. *Sexual Politics, Orientalism and Multicultural Citizenship in the Netherlands* (2010), p. 968.

⁶⁵⁸ Prins, Baukje. *The Nerve to Break Taboos: New Realism in the Dutch Discourse on Multiculturalism* (2002), p. 2.

⁶⁵⁹ De Lange, Sarah L. and David Art. Fortuyn versus Wilders: An Agency-Based Approach to Radical Right Party Building, in *West European Politics* (2011), p. 1234.

⁶⁶⁰ Wolinetz, Steven B. *Consensus Democracy under Pressure: The Netherlands after Pim Fortuyn* (2005), p. 1.

⁶⁶¹ De Lange, Sarah L. and David Art. Fortuyn versus Wilders: An Agency-Based Approach to Radical Right Party Building, in *West European Politics* (2011), p. 1234.

the underlying cultural norms in the Netherlands when it comes to human rights and gender roles, could attain resounding success by uncompromisingly adopting right-wing rhetoric with regard to cultural outsiders.⁶⁶² With view to the Dutch populist party environment, it served as an ideological inspiration for the PVV, while its mistakes in party-building and problems with weak institutionalization, which doomed it to remain a “flash party”, provided exceptionally valuable learning experiences for Wilders.⁶⁶³ The secrecy and rigidity of hierarchies within the PVV party have been justified as necessary⁶⁶⁴ on the grounds of the decline and eventual folding of the organizationally and behaviourally chaotic LPF.⁶⁶⁵

In addition to concerns about immigration, the Dutch U-turns in the attitudes displayed towards the EU have been traced to the reemergence of “traditional national interest” discourses. Politicians like Fritz Bolkenstein started to raise concerns regarding the country’s meekness when it came to the “defending of its corner” within the EU arena, with a perceived lax enforcement of EU budget deficit requirements in the case of “big” states like France and Germany constituting one of the impetuses.⁶⁶⁶ Beginning in the early 2000s, discourses promoting the imposition of limits when it comes to the future development of European integration began to feature prominently in the rhetoric of both mainstream and fringe parties. The Dutch national governments have started to emphasize that the national character (*eigenheid*) of the Netherlands should be protected in a new EU that is “bigger and pushy”.⁶⁶⁷

⁶⁶² Prins, Baukje. *The Nerve to Break Taboos: New Realism in the Dutch Discourse on Multiculturalism* (2002), pp. 12-13.

⁶⁶³ De Lange, Sarah L. and David Art. Fortuyn versus Wilders: An Agency-Based Approach to Radical Right Party Building, in *West European Politics* (2011), p. 1234.

⁶⁶⁴ “I have learned my lesson from the LPF. I know what can go wrong when you open up the party to members too quickly. When the people with the wrong agenda or wallet hijack the party. I can still see the wrong cars with the wrong real estate barons, who took over the party executive within no time. Therefore the PVV does not have any

members and we will not receive any subsidies this year.” (Geert Wilders, *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 4 May 2007) (citing Sarah L. De Lange and David Art. Fortuyn versus Wilders: An Agency-Based Approach to Radical Right Party Building, in *West European Politics* (2011), p. 1237).

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid, pp. 1235-1237.

⁶⁶⁶ Harmsen, Robert. Reframing a National Narrative of European Integration: the shifting contours of the Dutch European Debate (2007), pp. 2-3.

⁶⁶⁷ Vollaard, Hans. *Dutch Discourses of a Small Nation in an Inefficient Europe: Cosmopolitanism, Pragmatism, and Nationalism* (2011), p. 93.

One major concern raised across the party spectrum has been tied to the possibility of a loss of Dutch influence within the EU in the near future due to the power yielded by the larger states.⁶⁶⁸ Analysts such as Cuperus have stipulated that the highly publicized 2005 Dutch rejection of the proposed European Constitution was intricately tied to considerations about the EU and was not necessarily attributable to a spillover of the disillusionment with the governing forces within the Netherlands. Some of the prominent themes that were identified by the anti-EU disposed voters touched upon notions like the “betrayal of Europe” (the EU being conceptualized as a rampant globalization vehicle to the detriment of the traditional European social model) and the “razor blade of uniformization” (connected to the fears of the creation of a superstate).⁶⁶⁹ In 1990, perceptions of ethnic threats in the Netherlands were not closely intertwined with Euroscepticism. By contrast, studies from 2008 suggest that feelings of ethnic threat have become the strongest predictor of Euroscepticism.⁶⁷⁰ Verkaaik opines that the new nationalism in the Netherlands is different in comparison to previous forms, as it primarily targets “internal migrant others”, with Muslims being the particular focus.⁶⁷¹ Proclamations regarding the existence of a misfit between the multicultural EU and an emerging monocultural understanding of the Dutch nation have started to come to the surface, with factions more moderate than the PVV willing to espouse such positions.⁶⁷² In line with these tendencies, far rightist politicians have also increased their influence in the political fray. Due to the rise in the influence of populist figureheads like Geert Wilders and

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 97.

⁶⁶⁹ Cuperus, Rene. Why the Dutch Voted No – Anomaly of the New Euroscepticism in “Old Europe” (2006), pp. 96-99.

⁶⁷⁰ Lubbers, Marcel and Eva Jaspers. A Longitudinal Study of Euroscepticism in the Netherlands: 2008 versus 1990 (2011), p. 28.

⁶⁷¹ Verkaaik, Oskar. The cachet dilemma: ritual and agency in new Dutch nationalism (2010), p. 70.

⁶⁷² Vollaard, Hans. Dutch Discourses of a Small Nation in an Inefficient Europe: Cosmopolitanism, Pragmatism, and Nationalism” (2011), p. 99.

Rita Verdonk, a Dutch network described 2008 as “the year of populism” and the threat of populism to the tenets of Dutch democracy has been appraised as being quite serious.⁶⁷³

3.4 Majority/Minority dynamics pertaining to immigration

The Netherlands has a long tradition of immigration, to a large extent because of the well-developed economy and the religious freedoms afforded to immigrants. For example, between 1600 and 1800, 5 to 10 % of the Dutch citizens were born outside the territory of the Netherlands.⁶⁷⁴ The first post-WWII immigration wave (from Indonesia in and after 1949) and the third one (following the declaration of independence of Suriname in 1975) did not trigger serious debates regarding citizenship and the immigrants from these states were generally able to effortlessly obtain Dutch nationality soon after their arrival.⁶⁷⁵ Thus, until the late 1970s, immigration tended to be a low salience issue, with the presence of immigrants framed as only a temporary phenomenon (this was indicated by the label attached to them (mainly those from Mediterranean countries) – *gastarbeider* (“guest workers”)).⁶⁷⁶ The immigrants were essentially encouraged to maintain and cling to their own cultural identity.⁶⁷⁷ The 1979 “Ethnic Minorities” report was influential in highlighting the reality that many of the immigrants were actually there to stay and turned out to be a catalyst for policy reorganization – a form of official multiculturalism, premised on group-based emancipation and equality in the legal domain was launched.⁶⁷⁸ The late 1980s and early 1990s saw the emergence of strong criticisms of this approach, some of them arguing that the notion of

⁶⁷³ Vossen, Koen. Populism in the Netherlands after Fortuyn: Rita Verdonk and Geert Wilders Compared (2010), p. 25.

⁶⁷⁴ Groenendijk, Kees and Eric Heijs. *Immigration, Immigrants and Nationality Law in the Netherlands, 1945-1998* (2001), p. 143.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 144.

⁶⁷⁶ Parsons, Craig A. and Timothy M. Smeeding. *Immigration and the Transformation of Europe* (2006), pp. 186-187.

⁶⁷⁷ Messina, Anthony M. *The Logics and Politics of Post-WWII Migration to Western Europe* (2007), p. 23.

“identificational integration” was compromised and immigrants exhibited preferences for sticking to their own enclaves.⁶⁷⁹ In the 1990s, an Integration Policy, which stressed the importance of civic integration programs for newcomers, was at the forefront of the government’s efforts to tackle immigration issues, and there was an increasing politicization of migration.⁶⁸⁰ In the early to mid 1990s, the increased scepticism regarding immigration and integration also coincided with a “crisis of solidarity” in the Netherlands, with the Dutch social model facing serious challenges due to the number of social security contributors declining significantly – at the time, the Netherlands occupied one of the bottom spots in Europe with regard to the number of social security payers relative to those making up the ranks of the beneficiaries from social funding schemes.⁶⁸¹ Acute concerns surrounding immigrant integration started to abound after the turn of the millennium, to an extent due to a number of violent incidents involving immigrants such as the murder of prominent filmmaker Theo van Gogh by a Dutch-Moroccan in 2004, and helped initiate “New Style” integration policies.⁶⁸² In addition, as outlined in the previous section, the emergence of the LPF as an influential (albeit short-lived) party in the Netherlands was instrumental in altering the policy boundaries on immigration – Fortuyn’s ability to skillfully entangle suspicions towards Islam with the themes of personal freedom⁶⁸³ and portray the majority Dutch as vulnerable minorities themselves due to being at the mercy of groups espousing backward cultural values and misguided liberals, caused a shift in the focal point of the debates regarding the type of integration to be pursued.⁶⁸⁴ In this regard, “neo-assimilationist” measures like

⁶⁷⁸ Bruquetas-Callejo, Maria, Blanca Garces-Mascarenas, Rinus Penninx, and Peter Scholten. Policymaking related to integration and immigration: the Dutch Case (2009), pp. 14-16.

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid, pp. 17-19.

⁶⁸⁰ Maussen, Marcel. The Governance of Islam in Western Europe – a State of the Art Report (2007), p. 8.

⁶⁸¹ Arblaster, Paul. A History of the Low Countries (2006), p. 295.

⁶⁸² Bruquetas-Callejo, Maria, Blanca Garces-Mascarenas, Rinus Penninx, and Peter Scholten. Policymaking related to integration and immigration: the Dutch Case (2009), pp. 3-8.

⁶⁸³ Mepschen, Paul, Jan Willem Duyvendak and Evelien H. Tonkens. Sexual Politics, Orientalism and Multicultural Citizenship in the Netherlands (2010), p. 968.

⁶⁸⁴ Wolinetz, Steven B. Consensus Democracy under Pressure: The Netherlands after Pim Fortuyn (2005), p. 1.

compulsory integration packages for both newcomers and old comers became increasingly prominent.⁶⁸⁵

It has to be mentioned that the insistence on keeping intact certain designated categories, based on ethnic roots, may be having a polarizing effect on intergroup dynamics. Notions like *allochtoon*, which refer to anyone who has at least one parent not born in the Netherlands, are still being juxtaposed against those like *autochtoon* (native).⁶⁸⁶ Various studies have suggested that immigrants of Turkish or Moroccan descent are the most likely to find it challenging to gain acceptance within the Dutch mainstream and are also susceptible to evoking threat perceptions in relation to the maintenance of Dutch identity and culture.⁶⁸⁷ The self-image of the Dutch as a tolerant and multicultural nation has sometimes been challenged due to the understanding that even prior to the increase in nationalism in the mid 2000s, the liberal establishment in the Netherlands subscribed to an essentialist notion of culture and a marked disparity in economic standards between neighbourhoods populated by immigrants and native Dutch was retained.⁶⁸⁸

Recently, there has been a substantial influx of migrants from CEE and this has had an impact on public opinion as well as the populist agenda. As described in Ch. 2, official policies towards immigrants from outside the EU have become less receptive, with the EU level providing the blueprint,⁶⁸⁹ with the exchange of successful member states practices through a “demonstration effect” also playing a substantial role.⁶⁹⁰

⁶⁸⁵ Schinkel, Willem. *The Moralization of Citizenship in Dutch Immigration Discourse* (2008), p. 19.

⁶⁸⁶ Jennissen, R.P.W. and M. Blom. *Allochtoone en Autochtoone verdachten van verschillende delicttypen nadir bekeken* (Allochtoons and autochtoons are suspected of different types of crimes) (2007), pp. 3-4.

⁶⁸⁷ Verkuyten, Maykel and Ali Aslan Yildiz. *The Endorsement of Minority Rights: The Role of Group Position, National Context, and Ideological Beliefs* (2006), p. 529.

⁶⁸⁸ Verkaaik, Oskar. *The cachet dilemma: ritual and agency in new Dutch nationalism* (2010), p. 70.

⁶⁸⁹ Aileen, Tom. *How Stricter Dutch Immigration Policies are Contributing to Rising Islamic Fundamentalism in the Netherlands and Europe* (2006), pp. 459-460.

⁶⁹⁰ Cavasola, Silvia. *The Informal Europeanization of EU Member State Immigration Policies* (2012), p. 8.

4: Germany

4.1 Introduction

Germany, another founding member of the EU, has been shaped by a tumultuous nationalist history and at one point in time was the harbinger of values diametrically opposed to the core EU principles. In the aftermath of WWII, it gradually evolved into a poster child of the EU and has been characterized as a country in which the “national interest has fused with the European one”.⁶⁹¹ However, while offering a difficult institutional environment for nationalist-populist parties, it has not been spared the Netherlands’ forceful engagement with multicultural issues and Eurosceptic forces are no longer content with keeping a low profile.

4.2 German nationalism

Germany is commonly regarded as being the first country to adopt the quintessential ethnic model of nationalism. Hans-Ulrich Wehler (1987) maintains that the birth of “modern German nationalism” could be traced to the period between “1789 and 1815”, while other theorists like Hartmut Boockmann puts Germany in the same camp as other “modern nations” that rose from the ashes as early as the Middle Ages.⁶⁹² The traditions of the German Romantic movements provided the intellectual fuel for the ruling elites within Prussia and Austria, who were the pioneers in employing ethnic nationalism in their pursuit of the goal of

⁶⁹¹ Rittberger, Volker and Wolfgang Wagner. Germany’s Post-Unification Foreign Policy in Search of an Explanation: Realist, Liberal and Constructivist Approaches (1999), p. 12.

⁶⁹² Friedrich, Wolfgang-Uwe. *Wir sind ein Volk” Die Deutschen und die deutsche Einheit, 1945-1990 (We are one people The Germans and German Unity, 1945-1990)* (1992), p. 133 (citing Hans-Ulrich Wehler. *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte/German Societal History*, 1987 and Hartmut Boockmann. *Ostpreußen und Westpreußen/Eastern and Western Prussia*, 1992).

unification of the German-speaking populations in Central Europe.⁶⁹³ One milestone event pertaining to the entrenchment of mass nationalism within Germany was arguably the 1840 Rhine crisis (triggered by the then French Prime Minister Adolphe Thiers' statements that France could annex the left bank of the Rhine) during which the German general public exerted pressure on their various governments to adopt a very belligerent stance against France.⁶⁹⁴ Prior to that point in time, German nationalism has been gauged as exhibiting "liberal" features, while after the early 1840s a romantic strand of nationalism with *Völkisch* elements started taking shape.⁶⁹⁵ The German path to national unity and the creation of a national identity was heavily premised on the German *Kulturnation* (cultural nation), which ushered in the myth of the ethnic community of Germans (*Volksnation*) in the aftermath of the 1871 unification.⁶⁹⁶ The German *Kulturnation* was seen to encompass those who spoke the German language and internalized the values of humanistic *Bildung* (enrichment).⁶⁹⁷ Thus, German nationalism included both political and cultural layers, with the latter exhibiting a cultural bias, German culture being deemed as possessing superior value orientations when juxtaposed against the perceived materialism of the other Western civilizations.⁶⁹⁸

The premium placed on ethnicity would also cross over into the legal realm. Brubaker sums up the dominant ethnic paradigm with regard to citizenship in Germany as follows: "The German definition of the citizenry as a community of descent, restrictive toward non-German immigrants yet remarkably expansive toward ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, reflects the pronounced ethnocultural inflection in German self-

⁶⁹³ Dusché, Michael. *Origins of Ethnic Nationalism in Germany and Repercussions in India* (2010), p. 41.

⁶⁹⁴ Schulze, Hagen. *The Course of German Nationalism: from Frederick the Great to Bismarck, 1763-1867* (2000), p. 99.

⁶⁹⁵ Kroon, Sjaak and Jan Sturm. *Das nationale Selbstverständnis im Unterricht der Nationalsprache: Der Fall der Niederlande. Eine Vorstudie*. The national self-conception when it comes to mother tongue instruction: the Case of the Netherlands. A Preliminary Analysis) (1994), pp. 166-167.

⁶⁹⁶ Minkenberg, Michael. *Germany: from Kulturnation to Europeanization?* (2005), p. 37.

⁶⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁶⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

understanding”.⁶⁹⁹ The logic of ethnicity affected citizenship provisions in the aftermath of German unification, in part due to the need to justify the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine (a strong emphasis was placed on the region’s German culture and ancestry).⁷⁰⁰ The *Reichs- und Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz* (Germany’s first national citizenship law of 22 July 1913) established that German citizenship could only be acquired based on descent and not via territoriality.⁷⁰¹ This 1913 law was actually not amended in 1949, when the separate German states were established, as it made it easy to maintain legal ties with the East Germans.⁷⁰²

In terms of some of the long-term structural antecedents for the shocking excesses which came to characterize the Nazi regime, the delayed national unification and industrialization, as well as the lack of a *bourgeois* revolution and parliamentarization are seen as some of the stepping stones for Nazi ideology being able to successfully take roots in Germany.⁷⁰³ Prior to the First World War as well as in its aftermath, Europeanism (in the sense of Europe constituting its own civilization juxtaposed against Oriental ones) was articulated by prominent thinkers in Germany like theologian Ernst Tröltzsch, who followed the Kantian tradition, and regarded such conceptualizations as a way of providing a check on European colonial rivalries and state nationalism.⁷⁰⁴ During the Nazi period, despite some elements of Pan-Europeanism (generally only emphasizing similarities between Germany and Western European as well as some Southern European states) appearing in the official rhetoric as well as the establishment of close relations between Germany and like-minded

⁶⁹⁹ Hansen, Randall and Patrick Weil. *Introduction: Citizenship, Immigration and Nationality: Towards a Convergence in Europe?* (2001), p. 14 (citing Rogers Brubaker. *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, 1992, p. 4).

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁰¹ Green, Simon. *Citizenship Policy in Germany: The Case of Ethnicity over Residence* (2001), p. 25.

⁷⁰² Hansen, Randall and Patrick Weil. *Introduction: Citizenship, Immigration and Nationality: Towards a Convergence in Europe?* (2001), p. 15.

⁷⁰³ Eley, Geoff. *Reshaping the German Right – Radical Nationalism and Political Change after Bismarck* (1980), p. 7.

⁷⁰⁴ Joanne Miyang, Cho. *The German debate over civilization: Tröltzsch’s Europeanism and Jaspers’ cosmopolitanism* (1999) , p. 309.

regimes in CEE states like Hungary and Romania,⁷⁰⁵ Europeanism was frequently associated with decadence and deemed alien to German culture by chief ideologues like Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels.⁷⁰⁶ Pan-Europeanist proclamations generally did not reflect a strong attachment to Europe as a cultural space, but largely served instrumental ends.⁷⁰⁷ In this regard, “Aryanism” could be conceptualized as selective or restricted Europeanism, as the supposedly common roots between Germans and Western European people like the [Ancient] Greeks were overemphasized,⁷⁰⁸ while Eastern European ethnic groups like Poles were vilified by the Nazi leadership and were subjected to extreme dehumanization⁷⁰⁹ or in the case of Russians had their scientific achievements downplayed and credited to “Germanic strains” supposedly present only in the upper classes.⁷¹⁰ According to Pervushin, Hitler showed a preference for “Pan-Aryanism” rather than German nationalism, desiring the integration into a common political framework of all “Aryan people” and not necessarily insisting on Germans constituting the core of such a “grand project”.⁷¹¹

The defeat in WWII seemed to sound the death knell for the bellicose and virulent brand of nationalism that typified the Nazi years. The division of the country led to the development of different historical forms of historical consciousness in the case of East and West Germany in terms of efforts to come to terms with the past.⁷¹² The West German conception of the German nation evolved in the direction of a civic-territorial one, with an emphasis placed on non-ethnic aspects like *Verfassungspatriotismus* or constitutional patriotism. The West German notion of what constituted the “other” came to be represented

⁷⁰⁵ Bauerkämpfer, Arnd. *Transnational Fascism: Cross-Border Relations between Regimes and Movements in Europe, 1922-1939* (2010), p. 239.

⁷⁰⁶ Gordon, Terri J. *Fascism and the Female Form: Performance Art in the Third Reich* (2002), p. 169.

⁷⁰⁷ Hauner, Milan. Review: *The Weimar Republic and Nazi Germany* (1982), p. 337.

⁷⁰⁸ Valode, Philippe. *Hitler et les sociétés secrètes (Hitler and the secret societies)* (2012), pp. 126-127.

⁷⁰⁹ Davies, Norman. *Europe: A History* (2006), p. 1004.

⁷¹⁰ Klinge, Alexander. *10 Myths about Hitler* (2012), pp. 168-169.

⁷¹¹ Pervushin, Anton. *Окултнизм Хитлера (Hitler and the Occult)* (2006), pp. 138-139.

⁷¹² Lucas, Edward. *The New Cold War: Putin's Russia and the Threat to the West* (2008), pp. 184-186.

by Germany's own rabidly nationalistic and militaristic history.⁷¹³ In marked contrast, in East Germany, the German nation as an ethnic entity remained the frame of reference for national identity.⁷¹⁴ The GDR was viewed as a political structure that was to be of relatively short duration, as a future pan-German socialist nation (imagined in ethnic terms despite the pretences of Socialist Internationalism) would come to replace it.⁷¹⁵

In contrast, up to the late 1980s, in West Germany national (generic German) consciousness had been relegated to the backstage – the feeling of belonging to the West German state, the specific region or province, and the European Community exerted a stronger emotional pull on the collective psyche.⁷¹⁶ This confidence in referring to future pan-German designs in the case of East Germany could be attributed to the less pervasive feelings of moral guilt in comparison to those typical of its Western counterpart. The Eastern German state portrayed itself as having proudly emerged on the side of the “historical victors” in the aftermath of WWII after facing victimization by the Nazis.⁷¹⁷ In this regard, it has been claimed that GDR displayed marked deficiencies when it came to constructive engagement with the Nazi legacy,⁷¹⁸ with the sharp rise in radical right extremism in the 1990s arguably seen as a manifestation of this negligence on the part of the state authorities.⁷¹⁹

In a number of respects, German reunification could be seen to have proceeded quite smoothly despite the vastly different systems of governance between the FRG and the GDR. For instance, in the case of East Germany, prominent communist functionaries were generally regarded as easily dispensable, especially relative to their counterparts in other Eastern bloc states, as much of the country immediately became integrated with the West German

⁷¹³ Risse, Thomas. *Nationalism and Collective Identities: Europe versus the Nation-State* (2002), pp. 80-82.

⁷¹⁴ Minkenberg, Michael. *Germany: from Kulturnation to Europeanization?* (2005), p. 44.

⁷¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁷¹⁶ Marcussen, Martin, Thomas Risse, Daniela Engelmann-Martin, Hans Joachim Knopf and Klaus Roscher. *Constructing Europe? The Evolution of French, British and German Nation-State Identities* (1999), p. 13.

⁷¹⁷ Minkenberg, Michael. *Germany: from Kulturnation to Europeanization?* (2005), p. 45.

⁷¹⁸ Cooke, Paul. *Representing East Germany since unification: from colonization to nostalgia* (2005), p. 39.

⁷¹⁹ Hagan, John, Hans Merckens, and Klaus Böhnke. *Delinquency and Disdain: Social Capital and the Control of Right-Wing Extremism among East and West Berlin Youth* (1995), p. 1031.

institutions in the aftermath of unification.⁷²⁰ In the aftermath of the mergers between East and West German sister parties in 1990, the East Germans represented only an insignificant part of the total membership.⁷²¹ Still, there were a number of important cultural differences when it came to understandings of party practices. Eastern Germans (no matter their actual political affiliation) were generally supportive of the consociational approach to democracy (implying the participation of all principal parties and groups in the decision-making process) and frowned upon the more oppositional one endorsed by the West Germans.⁷²²

On the discourse front, reunification seems to have expediently created a blend between the East German and West German traditions of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (dealing with the past), with historiographical discourses since the early 1990s tending to focus on the “return to normalcy” theme, as well as the recreation of a benign “inward nationalism”, which would better equip the Germans to resolve the new economic and foreign policy issues.⁷²³ In the aftermath of unification, patriotism (rather than nationalism) attained an aura of legitimacy and increased in visibility, while only a small minority of Germans continued to emphasize a preference for an exclusively cosmopolitan identity.⁷²⁴ In 1984, two thirds of Germans were supportive of increasing the pace of European integration, but this percentage declined to 10 % in 1990, with the possibility of the adoption of a common currency being at the forefront of grievances.⁷²⁵ However, the rise of nationalism in Germany in the early 1990s (especially in the new Federal states in the east, where people consistently reported higher levels of patriotism and ethnocentrism)⁷²⁶ did not indicate a strong willingness to challenge the European frame, but was more the result of the social and economic turmoil following the

⁷²⁰ Vinen, Richard. *‘More Than Its Fair Share of History’: Europe and its Recent Past* (2007), p. 38.

⁷²¹ Ibid, p. 188.

⁷²² Ibid, pp. 192-193.

⁷²³ Berger, Stefan, Mark Donovan, and Kevin Passmore. *Writing National Histories: Western Europe since 1800* (1999), p. 252.

⁷²⁴ Friedrich, Wolfgang-Uwe. *Wir sind ein Volk” Die Deutschen und die deutsche Einheit, 1945-1990 (We are one people” The Germans and German Unity, 1945-1990)* (1992), pp. 148-149.

⁷²⁵ Ibid, p. 153.

⁷²⁶ Burbank, Hilary. *German National Identity: Patriotism and Stigma* (2003), pp. 10-11.

collapse of communism.⁷²⁷ To an extent the realization among Germans that their country was able to “successfully sell” its unification to the outside world (present it as a non-threatening event) due to its embeddedness into the supranational structures could be regarded as a contributing factor to the lack of a strong shift in attitudes.⁷²⁸ The argument has been advanced that Helmut Kohl was eventually rather successful in discrediting the critics of a single currency by appealing to the sentiment that “good Germans” had to support the Euro as any “good European” should do. Kohl was very conscious of what he saw as the need for the “Europeanization of the nation-state identity” in Germany.⁷²⁹

4.3 Post-Maastricht party system developments

As a whole, Germany was not notable for its Euroscepticism in the years prior to 1989. The FRG has traditionally been considered a compliant agent when it came to its interactions with other EU members. In the post-war years, Germany enjoyed a stable elite consensus around the European project and there was a broad cross-party agreement over the desirability of pooled political sovereignty. The presence of a compliant media, a permissive consensus among the general public, as well as an ingrained reluctance among the political class to engage in populist politics on the issue of the EU bolstered such an EU-permissive general stance.⁷³⁰ While the “permissive consensus” among the general public has not always implied a very enthusiastic endorsement of the EU project, the absence of plebiscites and referendums in the FRG has been credited with keeping the European issue a relatively

⁷²⁷ Görtemaker, Manfred. *The reunification of Germany* (2006), p. 366.

⁷²⁸ Ibid.

⁷²⁹ Marcussen, Martin, Thomas Risse, Daniela Engelmann-Martin, Hans Joachim Knopf and Klaus Roscher. *Constructing Europe? The Evolution of French, British and German Nation-State Identities* (1999), p. 23.

⁷³⁰ Taggart, Paul A. and Aleks Szczerbiak. *Opposing Europe? The Comparative Party Politics of Euroscepticism* (2010), pp. 16-17.

residual one.⁷³¹ German unification, however, affected, albeit in subtle forms, the former cross-party consensus on Europe. The Social Democratic Party (SDP) briefly considered adopting a more sceptical attitude towards Europe in the mid-1990s,⁷³² while the leftist PDS party remained critical of many fundamental aspects of the integration process. The Christian Democrats' regional sister party, the CSU, has also been more ambiguous in its pronouncements regarding the EU. It also developed close links with the Haider party in Austria.⁷³³ Right-wing parties in Germany (even if only enjoying fringe status) have been depicted as remaining irritants in the German political field, with their positions on Europe having the potential to influence debates touching upon Germany's place in a united Europe.⁷³⁴ In this regard, *die Republikaner* (founded in 1983) used to have close connections with the CSU and despite being characterized as firmly planted in right-wing territory, are currently not subjected to judicial monitoring and have managed to keep a certain distance from the parties with Neo-Nazi leanings, so their brand of Euroscepticism is arguably capable of making inroads into the mainstream (for more information see Appendix 2). All in all, a combination of factors in Germany has guarded against the emergence of party-based Euroscepticism as an enduring and influential phenomenon – the presence of institutional constraints, the low salience of EU issues in public opinion, and the political centre's success in setting forth the parameters of European debate.⁷³⁵ However, surveys from 2010 indicate that Euroscepticism is on the rise in Germany.⁷³⁶ Hellmann uses the term “de-Europeanization” to refer to the gradual “domestication” of German European policy and as shorthand for the increasingly problematic patterns of interactions between Germany and the

⁷³¹ Lees, Charles. *The Political Opportunity Structure of Euroscepticism: Institutional Setting and Political Agency in European Polities* (2008), p. 40.

⁷³² Lees, Charles. Dark matter: institutional constraints and the failure of party-based Euroscepticism in Germany (2002), p. 245.

⁷³³ Lees, Charles. *The Political Opportunity Structure of Euroscepticism: Institutional Setting and Political Agency in European Polities* (2008), p. 40.

⁷³⁴ Ibid, p. 32.

⁷³⁵ Ibid, p. 37.

EU.⁷³⁷ The strongest current narrative in Germany is the discourse for a limited and consolidated Europe.⁷³⁸

4.4 Majority/Minority dynamics pertaining to immigration

Sustained recruitment of foreign workers in West Germany started in 1955 and increased significantly after 1961. Up to 1973, all the stakeholders involved (from the German state to the “guestworkers” themselves) firmly believed that these arrangements would only be on a temporary basis and measures for their integration into German society were not considered.⁷³⁹ Paradoxically, in the early years of immigration, the only legislation that covered this area was a remnant of the Nazi Germany years. The 1965 Foreigner Act placed the onus on immigrants by stipulating that they were to prove “they deserved hospitality” and “did not harm the interests” of the FRG.⁷⁴⁰ The end of worker recruitment in 1973 did not stem the population flows into the German state, as family reunions began to take place. The temporary migration started to transform itself into a settlement process.⁷⁴¹ By the mid 1980s, Germany had lost considerable control over entry, especially in the case of family members of migrant workers.⁷⁴² Nonetheless, until 1998, the official government position generally reflected an insistence that “Germany is not an immigration country” and some of the official guidelines stressed the importance of support for voluntary return in the case of immigrants. Up until the 1980s, immigrants were generally not viewed as active

⁷³⁶ Lubbers, Marcel and Peer Scheepers. Divergent Trends of Euroscepticism in countries and regions of the European Union (2010), pp. 795-796.

⁷³⁷ Schieder, Siegfried. *Germany: Problematizing Europe, or Evidence of an Emergent Euroscepticism?* (2011), p. 37 (citing Gunther Hellmann, Rainer Baumann, Monika Bösch, and Benjamin Herborth. De-Europeanization by Default? Germany’s EU Policy in Defense and Asylum, 2005, pp. 143-144).

⁷³⁸ Ibid, p. 47.

⁷³⁹ Schnapper, Dominique, Pascale Krief and Emmanuel Peignard. *From Ethnic Nation to Universalistic Immigrant Integration: Germany* (2003), pp. 51-52.

⁷⁴⁰ Schäfer, Sarah, Greg Austin, and Kate Parker. *Turks in Europe: Why are we afraid?* (2005), pp. 6-7.

⁷⁴¹ Ibid, p. 52.

⁷⁴² McLaren, Lauren M. *Identity, Interests and Attitudes to European Integration* (2006), p. 121.

citizens in civil society. In Thränhardt's view, adopting anti-immigrant stances was not seen as particularly risky from a political standpoint not only by right-wing parties, but also by more moderate ones.⁷⁴³ Mainstream parties were also gauged not to have gone to great lengths to include the immigrant population in their daily activities.⁷⁴⁴

Between 1990 and 1999, more than 4 million new immigrants with a non-German background settled in Germany, which exceeded the corresponding numbers for the USA during the same period.⁷⁴⁵ During the same period, 2.3 million ethnic German immigrants arrived in the country, mainly from former USSR states.⁷⁴⁶ In 1998, a centre-left government took the reins of the country and initiated new laws for immigration, integration and citizenship, eradicating the *jus sanguinis* tradition of granting citizenship.⁷⁴⁷ Since January 2000, children of non-German parents who have legally resided in the country for a minimum of eight years are automatically awarded citizenship.⁷⁴⁸ The new government explicitly acknowledged the immigration situation in Germany and expressed support for the integration of newcomers.⁷⁴⁹ It is notable that at the time the CDU, which stood in opposition, did its best to put the new government on the defensive when it came to its *Ausländerpolitik* (foreigners' policies), launching accusations that "German cultural identity" could be compromised.⁷⁵⁰ However, in the subsequent two years, the centre-right factions CDU and CSU also changed some of their stances in this domain, recognizing a need for "controlled immigration".⁷⁵¹ The 2005 Immigration Act marked an assimilationist turn in German

⁷⁴³ Hunger, Uwe. *Party Competition and Inclusion of Immigrants in Germany* (2001), p. 305.

⁷⁴⁴ Ibid (citing Dietrich Thränhardt. *Einwanderkulturen und soziales Kapital. Eine komparative Analyse/Cultures of Immigration and Social Capital. A Comparative Analysis*, 2000, pp. 29-30).

⁷⁴⁵ Hunger, Uwe. *Party Competition and Inclusion of Immigrants in Germany* (2001), p. 304.

⁷⁴⁶ Dietz, Barbara. *Ethnic German Immigration from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union to Germany: the Effects of Migrant Networks* (1999), p. 1.

⁷⁴⁷ Pautz, Hartwig. *The politics of identity in Germany – the Leitkultur Debatte* (2004), pp. 2-3.

⁷⁴⁸ Algan, Yann, Christian Dustmann, Albrecht Glitz, and Alan Manning. *The Economic Situation of First- and Second-Generation Immigrants in France, Germany and the United Kingdom* (2009), p. 6.

⁷⁴⁹ Schnapper, Dominique, Pascale Krief and Emmanuel Peignard. *From Ethnic Nation to Universalistic Immigrant Integration: Germany* (2003), p. 53.

⁷⁵⁰ Pautz, Hartwig. *The politics of identity in Germany – the Leitkultur Debatte* (2004), pp. 2-3.

⁷⁵¹ Ibid.

immigrant integration policies, as it ushered in a new focus on integration courses for immigrants, prioritizing the acquisition of German language skills.⁷⁵² A new frame was introduced, stipulating that the teaching of immigration courses is to be conceptualized as a social service and immigrants were to be viewed as “customers” or “consumers”.⁷⁵³ Since 2007, there has also been a more active involvement of the local municipalities in the integration of immigrants (especially Muslims), with a high degree of success attained in cities like Stuttgart, Frankfurt, Berlin, and Munich.⁷⁵⁴ The *Leitkulturdebatte* (“debate on the existence of a leading culture within Germany”), which emerged out of the above outlined tensions, has continued to resurface and has been tied to a desire to maintain the ethnic boundaries between “Germans” and “immigrants”.⁷⁵⁵ Proponents of the existence of a “leading culture” have been accused of tacitly attempting to create a new form of overarching cultural identity for the Germans, which would on the surface replace the “blood and soil” conception of the nation, but actually retain many of its exclusionary facets.⁷⁵⁶

Germany’s lukewarm stances regarding the prospective Turkish membership in the EU are also not to be divorced from the generally negative evaluations of the degree to which Turks in Germany have been able to internalize core German values.⁷⁵⁷ The German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s October 2010 remarks on the deficiencies of multiculturalism within Germany, which served to revive some of the old debates, could possibly be better understood by taking into account the initial polemics surrounding the introduction of the *Leitkultur* notion. On the strategic front, one should also not lose sight of the fact that

⁷⁵² Twigg, Stephen, Sarah Schäfer, Greg Austin, and Kate Parker. *Turks in Europe: Why are we afraid?* (2005), p. 5.

⁷⁵³ Baringhorst, Sigrid, Uwe Hunger and Karen Schönwalder. *Politische Steuerung von Integrationsprozessen – Intentionen und Wirkungen* (The political domain as a driving force with regard to the processes of integration: intentions and effects) (2006), p. 176

⁷⁵⁴ Oberndörfer, Dieter. *Einwanderung wider Willen Deutschland zwischen historischer Abwehrhaltung und unausweichlicher Öffnung gegenüber (muslimischen) Fremden* (Immigration against the will of the national community: Germany between historical reluctance and unflinching openness towards (Muslim) others) (2009), p. 135.

⁷⁵⁵ Schneiders, Torsten Gerald. *Einleitung* (Introduction) (2009), p. 10.

⁷⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p.9.

mainstream parties like the CDU have also been quite capable of co-opting the voters holding more extreme views on immigration and the viability of democracy.⁷⁵⁸

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Germany has also been a major receiving country for migrants from CEE. This continued after the 2004 enlargement, despite the fact that Germany imposed transitional restrictions on access to its labour market for the full seven years it was entitled to do so.

⁷⁵⁷ Ibid.

5: Party Selection Rationale

The previous section identified the rationale behind the country selection, examining the nature of nationalist expression within specific states, the relations between majority and minority groups and the features of Europeanization in the period between 1990 and 2011. The following paragraphs provide a brief introduction to the particular political parties within the countries that were chosen for the purposes of analysis, and indicate why they deserve further scrutiny in view of the overarching aims of the thesis and its attempts to both address the hypotheses set out in Chapter Two and also uncover aspects of Europeanization-engendered Euroscepticism which were not apparent from the literature survey.

Firstly, the four parties in question – the Bulgarian Ataka, the Romanian PRM, the Dutch PVV and the German REP – fit the bill of “consistently Eurosceptic” factions and EU-related issues feature prominently in the pronouncements of party leaders and appear in the party manifestos. Ataka was established in April 2005 (as a result of a merger of a number of smaller political organizations – the NMSF, the BNPP, and the UPF) by Volen Siderov with the support of SKAT TV (a Bulgarian nationalistic TV news anchor).⁷⁵⁹ It has generally been thought of as toeing a soft Eurosceptic line, e.g. in the first years since its establishment it vigorously pressed for a renegotiation of Bulgaria’s accession treaty with the EU, but has not displayed intrinsic opposition to the country’s membership.⁷⁶⁰ The PRM was founded in 1991 by Vadim Tudor and from the very beginning it carved itself an ultra-nationalistic niche.⁷⁶¹

Together with Ataka it was one of the influential members of the short-lived ITS (Identity,

⁷⁵⁸ Bornschier, Simon. *National Dimensions of Political Conflict and the Mobilization of Euroscepticism by the Extreme Left and Right* (2010), p. 24.

⁷⁵⁹ Sgourev, Stoyan V. *The Explosive Rise of a Political Party: the Logic of sudden convergence* (2009), p. 653.

⁷⁶⁰ Tanasoiu, Cosmina and Robert Phillips Jr. *Bulgaria’s relations with the European Union: pre-and post-accession jitters* (2007), p. 10.

Tradition and Sovereignty) political group in the EP, which had a reputation as a gathering of staunchly Eurosceptic politicians with far right sympathies.⁷⁶² Formed in November 1983 by Franz Handlos, Ekkehard Voigt and Franz Schönhuber, the REP was an outgrowth of the dissatisfaction of some German traditional conservatives with Chancellor Helmut Kohl's "moral turn" and the reaching out to East Germany by members of the CSU.⁷⁶³ In the period between 1992 and 2001, it underwent frequent changes in its membership and was subject to monitoring at the behest of German courts. The party has experienced a reorientation in a moderate direction since the early 2000s, but opposition to the current form of EU integration has been at the cornerstone of its ideology.⁷⁶⁴ In some respects the PVV followed a similar route. It was established in February 2006 by Geert Wilders, a former member of the VVD (a party characterized as liberal and in favour of free market principles), who had become embroiled in serious disagreements with other VVD representatives over their opinions on Turkey's potential accession to the EU.⁷⁶⁵ Compared to its German counterpart, however, it has tended to be even more unabashedly Eurosceptic. For instance, it has been characterized as "fiercely Eurosceptic" in the Dutch national context relative to "timidly Eurosceptic" parties like the Dutch Socialist Party.⁷⁶⁶

Thus, while the four parties may occupy the political fringe and may not have any realistic prospects of taking the helm of their countries (especially by themselves), they nonetheless tend to carefully follow EU-related developments and are likely to be informed

⁷⁶¹ Bauer, Werner T. *Rechtsextreme und rechtspopulistische Parteien in Europa* (Extreme right and right-wing populist parties in Europe) (2011), p. 93.

⁷⁶² Directorate General for Internal Policies. The Selection of candidates for the European Parliament by national parties and the impact of European political parties (2009), p. 21.

⁷⁶³ Wanner, Martina. *Rechte Alltagskultur – Das Beispiel Jugendlicher im brandenburgischen Spree-Neisse-Kreis* (Everyday right-wing culture: the example of adolescents in the Spree-Neisse District in Brandenburg) (2006), pp. 18-19.

⁷⁶⁴ Bauer, Werner T. *Rechtsextreme und rechtspopulistische Parteien in Europa* (Extreme right and right-wing populist parties in Europe) (2011), p. 50.

⁷⁶⁵ Davidović, Marija, Jaap van Donselaar, Peter R. Rodrigues and Willem Wagenaar. The extreme right and discriminatory identity of the PVV (2011), p. 1.

⁷⁶⁶ Van Spanje, Joost and Claes de Vreese. So what's wrong with the EU? Motivations underlying the Eurosceptic vote in the 2009 European elections (2011), p. 414.

about the core EU domains (even if they might subsequently choose to distort some of the insights they receive through EU channels). In addition, in terms of their positioning within their party system, none of these parties could be considered “hard” Eurosceptics (though some of them may shun the label of “soft” Eurosceptics), so their critiques are more likely to touch upon specific EU impacts on the nation-state rather than on an intrinsic opposition to a country’s integration into a supranational structure, which is in accordance with the aims of the thesis. The Greater Romania party has proven somewhat elusive to classify, but Taggart and Szczerbiak recognize it as fitting the definition of a “soft Eurosceptic”.⁷⁶⁷ As for the German REP, the party is generally acknowledged to have turned to Euroscepticism in the aftermath of the negotiation of the Maastricht Treaty (described as “Versailles without a war” by then party leader Schönhuber). It still does not fit the label of a hard Eurosceptic party, with the desire for a return to the German Mark and anti-immigrant discourses playing a major part in shaping its opposition to integration into the European Union.⁷⁶⁸ Blagovesta Cholova, in a 2007 article, written at a time when it is generally agreed that Ataka reached the peak of its anti-EU sentiment, concurred with the “soft Eurosceptic” label for Ataka, drawing on Taggart and Szczerbiak’s methodology.⁷⁶⁹ Similarly, the PVV has been rated as a right wing populist party rather than a “pure Eurosceptical force” (without a right-wing populist agenda), in contrast to parties like UKIP.⁷⁷⁰ However, since around July 2012, the party has actually been advocating for the Netherlands’ withdrawal from the EU, so it remains to be seen whether this total rejection of the EU is just a temporary phase or will actually become a defining component of its identity.⁷⁷¹ It also has to be taken into account

⁷⁶⁷ Taggart, Paul and Aleks Szczerbiak. *The Party Politics of Euroscepticism in EU Member and Candidate States* (2002), p. 14.

⁷⁶⁸ Almeida, Dimitri. *The Impact of European Integration on Political Parties – Beyond the Permissive Consensus* (2012), p. 257.

⁷⁶⁹ Cholova, Blagovesta. *The Europeanization of the Bulgarian Party System* (2007), p. 200.

⁷⁷⁰ Hartleb, Florian. *European Project in Danger? Understanding Precisely the Phenomena “Euroscepticism, Populism and Extremism” in Times of Crisis* (2012), p. 48.

⁷⁷¹ *Verkiezingsprogramma PVV 2012 - 2017 Hún Brussel, óns Nederland* (Electoral manifesto PVV 2012-2017 Their Brussels, Our Netherlands), p. 17.

that right-wing parties are not unlikely to promote an economic Europe (at least to a larger degree than left-wingers), so this fits together with my expectation that they would be likely to express criticism of the EU's involvement in non-economic realms.⁷⁷²

Secondly, all of these parties tend to take a heavy-handed approach to minority issues and while majority-minority relations may not always constitute an *idée fixe* from the perspective of party visionaries, opposition to the population increase of members of specific cultural or ethno-religious groups, and/or their presumed gains in influence, are frequently referred to and identified as principal concerns. Both Ataka and the PRM are at least partially left-wing in their economic orientation and prominent members have been accused of collaboration with the communist regimes in their countries, and this possibly has a connection to their attitudes towards minority empowerment. Interestingly enough, minorities in both countries played a role in paving the way for the toppling of the communist system – the Hungarian minority protests in Timișoara that began on 16 December 1989 represented the first phase of the Romanian Revolution,⁷⁷³ while Zhivkov's crackdown on the Turks in Bulgaria in the late 1980s discredited him with the Soviets⁷⁷⁴ and his own foreign minister Petar Mladenov, who eventually orchestrated a coup from above, ousting him from his position in November 1989. However, the civil society demonstrations in both countries that saw a high turnout of members from the majority ethnic groups were even more decisive in convincing communist hardliners to relinquish power.

In addition, these parties have tended to reap dividends during periods of increased societal tensions and/or transformations in the general discourses pertaining to minority

⁷⁷² Lubbers, Marcel and Peer Scheepers. Divergent trends of Euroscepticism in countries and regions of the European Union (2010), p. 790.

⁷⁷³ Siani-Davies, Peter. *The Romanian Revolution of December 1989* (2005), pp. 60-61.

⁷⁷⁴ Bishku, Michael B. *Turkish-Bulgarian Relations: From Conflict and Distrust to Cooperation Over Minority Issues and International Politics* (2003), pp. 90-91.

groups by positioning themselves at the forefront of debates and portraying themselves as the only legitimate defenders of the national community.

For example, the Ataka party has referred to the “treasonous acceptance of European minority rights legislation” due to its purported anti-Bulgarian character.⁷⁷⁵ Accusations of the privileging of a specific minority group (ethnic Turks) through the concerted efforts of the MRF and Bulgarian governments, often at the expense of ethnic Bulgarians, feature prominently in Ataka proclamations.⁷⁷⁶ It also has to be stipulated that while in the 1990s there were only sporadic references to Bulgarian nationalism in Bulgarian political discourses, since 2005 it is gauged to “have entered the vocabulary of everyday interactions in a very visible way” and this has also increased the dissonance between the Bulgarian and the Turkish communities.⁷⁷⁷ Anti-Hungarianism has sometimes been described as a hallmark of PRM’s ideology⁷⁷⁸ and the party frequently touches upon themes like territorial integrity and the respect for the rights of ethnic Romanians residing in foreign states.⁷⁷⁹

The PVV is staunchly opposed to the Islamisation of the Netherlands (its November 2006 parliamentary elections campaign referred to the “tsunami-like” nature of this phenomenon) and fears related to immigration are tied to the increase in the number of members of ethno-religious groups in the Netherlands that are overwhelmingly Muslim.⁷⁸⁰

The REP faction also appears to be particularly distrustful of one particular section of society – those of the Islamic faith (its opposition to Turkish accession is a major component

⁷⁷⁵ Kavalski, Emilian. Do not play with fire – the end of the Bulgarian ethnic model or the persistence of inter-ethnic tensions in Bulgaria? (2007), p. 29.

⁷⁷⁶ Ibid, pp. 29-30.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 29.

⁷⁷⁸ Roper, Steven D. and Florin Fesnic. Historical Legacies and their Impact on Post-Communist Voting Behaviour (2003), p. 127.

⁷⁷⁹ Smrčková, Markéta. Comparison of Radical Right-wing parties in Bulgaria and Romania: the National Movement of Ataka and the Great Romania Party (2009), p. 53.

⁷⁸⁰ Davidović, Marija, Jaap van Donselaar, Peter R. Rodrigues and Willem Wagenaar. The extreme right and discriminatory identity of the PVV (2011), p. 1.

of its criticism of the continued EU enlargement).⁷⁸¹ It has also been quick to involve itself in the *Leitkultur Debatte* that re-emerged in Germany (triggered at the elite level) in late 2010.⁷⁸²

Lastly, these four parties have been difficult to classify, running the gamut from “slightly to the right of centre-right” to “radical right” depending on the scholars in question or the methodology used. (see Appendix 3 for some suggested placings on the political spectrum.) Examining the parties’ stances on specific Europeanization-related issues could provide some helpful guidance when it comes to future attempts at positioning them within the spectrum.

There has been no real agreement between scholars on whether Ataka ticks the “political left” or “political right” box.⁷⁸³ It is also contested to what extent its understanding of Bulgarian nationhood is traceable to an ethnic (as opposed to a civic) nationalist preference⁷⁸⁴ or whether it assigns a priority to anti-globalism rather than nationalism.⁷⁸⁵ Similarly, the PVV has been characterized as exhibiting some features of a “racialist” or “racial revolutionary” party,⁷⁸⁶ but at the same time the degree of its personnel overlapping with “extreme right” parties in the Netherlands has been gauged to be limited.⁷⁸⁷ The way it was formed and its party history have been judged as untypical compared to those of conventional “extreme right” factions.⁷⁸⁸ The German REP has sometimes been depicted as essentially a centre-right faction with some minor radical elements, while other scholars label

⁷⁸¹ *Für die deutsche Republik – Raus aus dieser EU!* (For the good of Germany – leave the European Union) (2009).

⁷⁸² *Der neue REP-ort – Multikulti ist gescheitert* (The new report – multiculturalism has failed) (2011).

⁷⁸³ Genov, Nikolay. *Radical Nationalism in Contemporary Bulgaria* (2010), p. 41.

⁷⁸⁴ Zhecheva, Kristina. *Ataka – between nationalism and populism* (2007), p. 60. (also cited in Dandolov, Philip. *Nationalist-populist parties and the EU: attitudes and their determinants* (pragmatic and/or ideological, 2010).

⁷⁸⁵ Lilov, Grigor. *Най-богатите българи – Политиците Парите! Мръсните тайни!* (*The richest Bulgarians – the politicians, their wealth and the dirty secrets*) (2013), p. 320.

⁷⁸⁶ Davidović, Marija, Jaap van Donselaar, Peter R. Rodrigues and Willem Wagenaar. *The extreme right and discriminatory identity of the PVV* (2008), pp. 9-10.

⁷⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁷⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

it as a member of the “neo-racist right” akin to the *Front National*.⁷⁸⁹ While the Greater Romania party has been frequently depicted as a brash proponent of ethnic nationalism, as a typical Romanian communist successor party, it has been gauged to exhibit ideological flexibility.⁷⁹⁰

In essence, the four parties are roughly comparable with regard to their anti-elite discourses, distrust of the manifestations of EU integration, the typically nationalistic components of their grievances and the importance allotted to monitoring majority-minority dynamics within their countries. During the course of the research, the Eurosceptic Alternative for Germany (AfD) was established,⁷⁹¹ but given that I was already in the writing-up phase when it came to the thesis and was attempting to meet the academic deadlines, it was unfortunately not viable to travel to Germany and try to conduct interviews with some of the members of this political formation.⁷⁹²

⁷⁸⁹ Bauer, Werner T. *Rechtsextreme und rechtspopulistische Parteien in Europa* (Extreme right and right-wing populist parties in Europe) (2012), p. 9.

⁷⁹⁰ Pop-Eleches, Grigore. A party for all seasons: Electoral adaptation of Romanian Communist successor parties (2008), p. 470.

⁷⁹¹ The party was officially established on 6 February 2013 (*Demo: Grosse Bürgerbewegung mit dem Namen AfD/Demonstration: a big citizens' movement under the name of AfD*, 11 September 2013).

⁷⁹² The AfD went close to passing the 5% threshold for the German Parliament in the 2013 German federal election and while still having the markings of a “single-issue” (it is particularly opposed to the euro currency) party, it may be in the process of expanding its support base by entering traditional right-wing territory. (in Friederike Heine. *Next Stop, Brussels? German Euroskeptics' Breakthrough Moment*, 2013). It earned 7.04% of the casted votes and 7 seats in the 2014 European Parliament election (in *Der Bundeswahlleiter. Vorläufiges Ergebnis der Europawahl 2014* (Results of European Parliament elections held on 25 May 2014)).

Chapter Conclusion

The four countries that will be the focus of the empirical work fit the bill with regard to the principal investigative aim of the thesis. They represent divergent nationalist paths and, in the case of the two Western European states, different traditions when it comes to the way EU discourses are approached. In recent years, the EU issue has become a contested one and has been at the forefront of political debates within all of these countries. All four countries are characterised by relative disparity in ethnic make-up – Germany and the Netherlands are usually described as multicultural societies, while the settled minorities in Bulgaria and Romania frequently occupy the spotlight when it comes to political issues. Moreover, the countries' location within Europe makes them natural candidates for participating in frontier control initiatives within the EU. Hence, nationalist-populist actors in these states do not find it difficult to steer discussion in the direction of “minority issues”. In such a politically turbulent age, in which there has almost been a fusion between the nation-state and the EU in many policy areas, it is essential to explore the extent to which grievances related to non-core groups tend to be “filtered” through the EU when raised by nationalist-populist actors. One also needs to identify the precise reasons why the EU might at times (and within specific national contexts) be “let off the hook” with regard to concerns related to the situation of minorities.

Chapter Four: European (Union) identity construction and constraints on nationalist expression as sources of Euroscepticism

Chapter Introduction

Chapter 4 is the first of three chapters analysing the empirical data gathered from interviews and party documents. It explores complaints about the EU in general, as opposed to country-specific cases of citizenship/migration policy and minority empowerment (discussed in Chapters 5 and 6). More specifically, Chapter 4 addresses the increasing role of Europe as a new point of identification. As Chapter 2 suggested, it might be assumed that this was not likely to be a major cause of Euroscepticism, since attempts to promote EU identity seem unlikely to pose much of a threat to national identities in Europe. Theorists specializing in the study of nationalism such as Anthony Smith do not regard it as likely that Euronationalism could become a viable alternative to traditional nationalism, which is based on language and other cultural and ethnic links.⁷⁹³ Indeed, the emotive potential of EU identity was hardly regarded as a threat by the interviewees.

Nonetheless, the interviews revealed four more specific sources of discontent with the EU's identity-building project and its attempt to impose a certain identity on Europe. According to interviewees, Europeanization jeopardises pre-existing pan-national affinities and the EU discriminates against certain clusters of nations within Europe; Europe's cultural identity has been dangerously redefined to include Islam; as an emerging foreign policy actor,

⁷⁹³ Smith, Anthony D.. *National Identity and the Idea of European Unity* (1992), pp. 72-75.

the EU may eclipse the Atlantic alliance; and the EU attempts to suppress nationalism among member-states.

The first of these grievances (the EU challenge to pre-existing pan-national identities) to some extent relates to the idea - discussed in Chapter 2- that certain member-states are supposedly more highly valued and 'core' to the European project than others and that the European identity constructed by the EU is a Franco-German one. Hence southern or East Europeans feel disparaged and disadvantaged within the EU. However, the finding that pan-national identities are so important to nationalist populists could not have been anticipated from the literature surveyed in Chapter 2. Intuitively, one might suppose that nationalist-populist actors detested all foreigners and would not feel strong affinities with any other nations. Their proclivity towards very exclusive conceptions of the nation would suggest a reluctance to see similarities between themselves and others. Instead, it seems that the interviewees share mainstream views within their countries, in other words that their own sense of national identity nests within other identities (Slav, Latin, former Atlantic power) as identified in Chapter 3. It is these identities that are threatened by Europeanisation. The historical narratives pertaining to each country still shape the standpoint of nationalists in each state and predispose them to view the EU membership (and identity building) in an intrinsically negative light.

The three remaining grievances were more predictable, given the findings of other scholars already discussed in Chapter 2. The chapter discusses how interviewees complained about the content of the new 'Europe' constructed by the EU: an enlarged Europe containing a Muslim ('Islamist') and East European presence. Subsequently the chapter focuses on a different understanding of Europeanisation by discussing objections to the EU developing a

unified foreign policy capable of opposing Atlanticism and projecting its own identity in international affairs. Finally, Pan-Europeanism will be discussed in relation to the perceived stifling of the expression of nationalist sentiments as well as what is seen as the ostracism of nationalist-populist parties by their mainstream counterparts, which constrains their freedom to maneuver within their own political systems. As suggested in Chapter 2, Euronationalism could be seen as describing the containment of conventional nationalism. The four countries are not treated at equal length in each section, since different aspects of Europeanisation proved to provoke different degrees of Euroscepticism among the various parties and in recent years Ataka and the PVV have been more privy to the higher-level political developments in their respective countries than their German and Romanian counterparts.

A “manufactured European (Union) identity” can be a difficult concept to understand, and there is no single widely accepted term for the EU’s attempt to create a new and competing type of ‘nationalism’. As mentioned earlier in the thesis, for this reason the interviewees were invited to comment on ‘pan-European nationalism’. This appeared to be a reasonably obvious and familiar term, and therefore more suitable than ‘Euronationalism’, the label used in Chapter Two. Both terms are used in Chapter Four.

Pre-existing pan-national identifications as a reason to resist the imposition of EU identity

National identity could rarely be considered in isolation and frequently interacts and overlaps with competing or complementing identities. This is especially true of countries that from a historical standpoint have been at the crossroads of different civilizations and have pursued non-isolationist foreign policies, as in the case of the Balkans or Central Europe.

In the case of the Ataka party, there is a marked inclination to position Bulgarian identity within the Eastern European or Slavic cultural and religious tradition. The cultural and historical commonalities between Bulgarians and other Eastern European people are emphasized by Ataka members, even if at the same time it is stressed that in the contemporary world it is not necessarily a badge of honor to proclaim that you originate from an Eastern European country.⁷⁹⁴ Another reason for this affinity with Eastern Europe is tied to religion, with the distinctiveness of the Eastern Orthodox faith regarded as a unifying motif, but also a validation of the Bulgarian self-conceptualization as one of the most ancient nation-states in existence.⁷⁹⁵

Russia tends to be portrayed by Ataka members as the East European country most influential in Bulgaria's history, a country that has enjoyed a special relationship with Bulgaria throughout the ages.⁷⁹⁶ They attribute this sentiment to Russia's prominent role in promoting Slavic culture, its contributions in bringing about the end of Ottoman rule in 1878 as well as the consequences of the last two world wars, during which the Bulgarian decision to fight as part of an opposing alliance to that of Russia resulted in the country finding itself on the losing side of the war.⁷⁹⁷ Considerations like trade are also intertwined with more symbolic ones, with Russia mentioned as having been one of the main trading partners of Bulgaria over the course of many generations.⁷⁹⁸

While it was not directly claimed that after EU accession Brussels had steered Bulgaria away from pursuing close relations with Russia, the striving towards EU membership among

⁷⁹⁴ Author's interview with Shavel S.

⁷⁹⁵ Author's interview with Nikolay Pehlivanov.

⁷⁹⁶ Author's interviews with various Ataka members.

⁷⁹⁷ Author's interview with Roumen Vatashki.

Bulgarian elites was associated with a downplaying of Russia's role in Bulgarian history.⁷⁹⁹

In that regard, the upper echelons of Bulgarian society are accused by Ataka members of believing the false mantras that only by distancing the country from Russia could it become a fully-fledged EU member.⁸⁰⁰ In essence, mainstream Bulgarian political parties are blamed for over-emphasizing the conflictual elements in the relationship between Russia and Bulgaria in order to please the EU.⁸⁰¹ Thus, in an indirect way the EU is assumed to set the tone for important discussions of societal issues, and Bulgarian parties are deemed overly attentive to perceived or imagined EU cues, which from the standpoint of Ataka complicates the country's relationship with Russia.

Accordingly, the 20 Points of Ataka's Programme Scheme express support for an enhanced openness to the East (in particular, improvements in Bulgarian-Russian relations), even if such a course of action could potentially go against the supposed duties of EU membership.⁸⁰²

In addition to the intricate ties to Eastern European cultures, Western European overarching values with which the EU project is imbued are regarded as being at loggerheads with those espoused by Eastern Europeans, in a historical and contemporary sense. One of Siderov's works from the early 2000s (*The Power of the Mamons*) offers unrelenting criticism of the historical developments in Western Europe since the early modern period and juxtaposes them against the historical paths undertaken by Eastern European countries. One of the boldest assertions is that the Protestant faith associated with figures like Luther, Calvin and Zwingli has given rise to the immediate precursors of [communist] totalitarianism and

⁷⁹⁸ Author's interview with Mario Punchev.

⁷⁹⁹ Author's interview with Roumen Vatashki.

⁸⁰⁰ Author's interviews with various Ataka members.

⁸⁰¹ Author's interview with Adrian Asenov.

fascism, which became influential ideological movements in the mid 20th century. It is also emphasized that contrary to most historical works (thought to deliberately misrepresent reality), the period between the 12th and 18th centuries was relatively peaceful in Eastern Europe in comparison to in the Western part of the continent, with the casualties incurred due to the Irish famine in the mid-19th century and the Thirty Years' War being cited, as well as more recent cases like the admission of the Norwegian Lutheran Church that hundreds of Roma people were sterilized in Norway between 1933 and 1977. The "West" is characterized as "lacking true [Christian] faith and easily swayed by materialistic concerns" and is in essence regarded as "less moral" than the "East".⁸⁰³ Siderov admonishes the West for purportedly having treated the Eastern Orthodox states with contempt throughout the ages and maintains that such attitudes continue to persist in the present day, condemning the bombing of Serbia by NATO in 1999 and the allegedly specific targeting of Eastern Orthodox places of worship.⁸⁰⁴ He also refers to statements made by American political scientist and former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski that "following the end of communism, Eastern Orthodoxy has become the last enemy of the West". Siderov also expresses indignation at Samuel Huntington's contention that "a Westerner would have an easier time establishing rapport with a Soviet communist than with an Eastern Orthodox nationalist".⁸⁰⁵

This emphasis on the historically conflictual relationship between the Eastern European and Western European parts of the continent feeds into contemporary concerns attributable to EU membership. For instance, the Ataka leader expresses doubts the sincerity of the

⁸⁰² 20 точки на партия Атака (20 Points of the Ataka Party).

⁸⁰³ Siderov, Volen. *Властта на Мамона (The Power of the Mamons)* (2003), pp. 82-83. (also cited in Dandolov, Philip. Nationalist-populist parties and the EU: attitudes and their determinants (pragmatic and/or ideological), 2010).

⁸⁰⁴ Ibid, pp. 106-107.

⁸⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 106.

“rejoining the European family of nations” rhetoric that is employed at the EU level. It is stipulated that the EU does not really stand to benefit from an economically affluent and sufficiently competitive Bulgaria⁸⁰⁶ and the loyalty to the free market principles within the EU will only exacerbate the underlying differences between European countries and will not be conducive to helping Bulgaria pull out of its economic predicament.⁸⁰⁷

While the pro-Eastern vs. pro-Western frames occupy an important place in Ataka’s rhetoric, there has been a slight mellowing of these sentiments in recent years. Siderov, in his newest work, which touches upon Bulgarian nationalism, is highly critical of Pan-Slavist theories, for instance those adopted by Czech historian and diplomat Konstantin Jireček.⁸⁰⁸ He emphasizes the similarities between Pan-Slavism and Pan-Sovietism⁸⁰⁹ and sees a stronger emphasis on the Thracio-Illyrian origin of the Bulgarians (rather than the Slavic one) as desirable. His reasoning is that the ethnogenesis theory that ascribes a dominant role to the Thracians also assumes that the Bulgarians are the descendants of the autochthonous/indigenous population of the Balkans rather than successors of more primitive nomadic tribes that settled the Balkans in the 7th century,⁸¹⁰ and thus it is more conducive to fostering national pride in the case of his co-ethnics. There appears to be an acknowledgment that contemporary Russia would be less interested in creating its own alternative to the European Union (unlike in the 1990s). The Russian ambassador to Brussels, Vladimir Chizhov, on 10 November 2006, in an interview for *вестник Капитал* (Kapital newspaper), jokingly utilized the concept of a “Trojan horse” of Russia in the EU when speaking about Bulgaria, emphasizing that he attaches a positive connotation to this phrase and believes that

⁸⁰⁶ Ibid, p. 434.

⁸⁰⁷ Ibid, pp. 434-435.

⁸⁰⁸ Siderov, Volen. *Основи на Българизма (Building blocks of Bulgarianism)* (2011), pp. 21-22.

⁸⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 25.

⁸¹⁰ Ibid, p. 26.

Bulgaria could be something along the lines of an inner representative of the Russian viewpoints within the Union.⁸¹¹

These slight shifts in discourses have however solidified the belief that the European Union is in some respects discriminatory towards Russia. Consequently, a number of respondents lament that the EU does not realize that its real duty is to bring true European countries (including Russia) together and not go off on tangents by wasting resources to woo Turkey to join. In essence, the EU is assumed to be exerting an inordinate effort to make Turkey a member, while refraining from paving the way for Russia and Ukraine, as Ukraine and Russia are regarded as Europeans par excellence, unlike Turkey.⁸¹²

Western values associated with core countries of the European Union are not always viewed in a negative light (reflecting widespread admiration for Western values among ordinary Bulgarians). For instance, when discussing national identities, some Ataka members like Monev and Punchev (without prompting) express a view that Western cultural mores are almost totally opposed to the “Oriental values”, some elements of which still need to be expunged from the Bulgarian national character.⁸¹³ Thus, unlike Bulgarian playwright and patriot Dobri Voynikov who tends to vociferously reject the need for “Western cleansing” of an “Orientalized” national psyche as an example of pernicious “foreign worshipping”,⁸¹⁴ some Ataka members (at least in theory) see some merit to engaging in such an “exercise”. The theme of “Oriental traces” when it comes to the Bulgarian mentality is especially sensitive and the anti-Orientalist motif has even been utilized in media campaigns targeting

⁸¹¹ Roth, Jürgen. *The New Bulgarian Demons/Die neuen Dämonen. Das bulgarische Mafianetzwerk* (2008), p. 272.

⁸¹² Author’s interview with Mario Punchev.

⁸¹³ Author’s interviews with Mario Punchev and Galen Monev.

religious sects and cults, with preachers belonging to unfamiliar religious denominations compared to Ottoman Janissaries due to purportedly being able to transform impressionable youths into automatons.⁸¹⁵ However, Monev laments that under the EU influence it is only the “consumerist values associated with Western Europe” that are being adopted rather than those Western cultural tenets that are indeed worthy of emulation.⁸¹⁶ The EU is deemed to have transformed Western mentalities in such a way that they are now “way past the ideal point”.⁸¹⁷ The Bulgarians’ receptiveness to excessive consumerism has been associated with the precarious economic situation of the country prior to membership and the fact that once it actually joined the Union, membership provided a sharper focus on Bulgaria’s backwardness, as the country now saw itself as the poorest in a club of 27, while prior to that it was somewhat less inclined to compare itself with other European countries when it came to matters like national income.⁸¹⁸ Furthermore, Western values are regarded as too pervasive (because of their association with progressiveness), so the effects of an over regulative EU on a rather flawed national psyche (Bulgaria is regarded as being too receptive to foreign models in a historic sense) are viewed as pernicious:

“We were being commanded by the Americans anyway [prior to EU membership], despite them not possessing any legal authority, so it is much worse now that there are EU directives and a competing EU legal order.”⁸¹⁹

⁸¹⁴ Баева, Iskra. *Представата за Европа в модерна България - от Османската Империя до Европейския Съюз* (*Perceptions of Europe in modern Bulgaria – from the Ottoman Empire to the European Union*) (2012), pp. 174-175.

⁸¹⁵ Anderson, John. *The Treatment of Religious Minorities in South-Eastern Europe: Greece and Bulgaria Compared* (2002), p. 24.

⁸¹⁶ Author’s interview with Galen Monev.

⁸¹⁷ Author’s interviews with various Ataka members.

⁸¹⁸ Ibid.

⁸¹⁹ Author’s interview with Nikolay Pehlivanov.

In any case, it is emphasized that Bulgarians need to learn to see through the EU core countries' supposedly superior ability to present a sanitized image of themselves. As claimed by Punchev: "I have seen pushing and shoving as well as other physical confrontations breaking out in the national parliaments of Western European countries...it is not fair to always speak of the "bad Easterner".⁸²⁰

Pan-Europeanism is also conceptualized as problematic due to potentially erasing the distinctions (in the mind of Westerners) between neighbouring countries like Bulgaria and Serbia. The assumption is that Bulgaria and Serbia will no longer be regarded as separate entities with unique nationalist histories once the latter joins the supranational community.⁸²¹

The value placed on embedding Bulgarian identity within the Slavic realm creates problems in embracing a form of Pan-Europeanism that is shaped by a supranational community of which Western European countries like Germany and France constitute the core. While in some respects the membership in the EU is associated with a recognition of Bulgaria's rightful place within the European family of nations, as a result of the myriad of factors outlined above such as not being able to gain membership as an "equal" (in a cultural and economic sense), it is an imperfect conclusion of Bulgaria's journey towards rediscovering its true European place.

As for the PRM party, European identity in relation to the Romanian one also tends to be underemphasized, with a preference displayed for the somewhat narrower category of Latin or Southern European identity. One of the reasons cited for this attitude has to do with objective geographical factors. As Romania is the only Latin country in a region that hosts a

⁸²⁰ Author's interview with Mario Punchev.

number of Slavic states, and the only other non-Slavs, the Hungarians, have a special (rather conflictual relationship) with the Romanians, there is a natural inclination to feel a common bond with culturally Latin countries rather than immediate neighbors.⁸²² At the same time, Romanian identity is regarded as “fundamentally Western”, because there is sufficient common ground between the Romanians and the Italian, French, Spanish and Portuguese people, who have been among the pioneers when it came to the emergence of Western culture. The language component of Romanian identity is deemed especially salient, as the country was one of the very few formerly communist ones in which a Latin language was spoken.⁸²³ In addition, some members also put forth the interpretation of Romania actually constituting the birthplace of Western culture and even the dated history of humanity as a whole, with the Carpathian arch representing the beginning of the cultural history of humanity.⁸²⁴

In addition to cultural and historical factors, the preference for associating the country with the Latin realm is also attributable to reasons connected to its perceived underlying mentality. The notion of “Latin” tends to be juxtaposed by Greater Romania party members against that of “Germanic”, with the latter conceived of as a torch-bearer when it came to industrialization. For instance, the PRM members’ contention is that Romania’s character is still that of a predominantly agricultural country, as it was only developed industrially during the communist years and the perception is that the industrial mentality of the Romanian people is still in its pioneering phase.⁸²⁵ This romanticized reading of Romania’s identity is consistent with some of the publications stressing the preeminence of rural nationalism and

⁸²¹ Author’s interview with Shavel S.

⁸²² Author’s interviews with various PRM representatives.

⁸²³ Ibid.

⁸²⁴ Author’s interview with Petru Cojan.

⁸²⁵ Author’s interviews with various PRM representatives.

“Romanian villagers being the purest representatives of European civilization”.⁸²⁶ In that regard, discipline and the typically Romanian mentality are seen generally not to go hand in hand and there is a tendency to regard countries like Bulgaria as quite distinct from Romania due to being instilled with technocratic values (like the Germans) to a much larger extent than the Romanians.⁸²⁷

This self-conceptualization is also attributable to a suspicion of the EU manifested in a more tangible way. For instance, a number of PRM publications draw attention to the purported Nazi roots of the European Union. Walter Hallstein, who is dubbed as the “architect of the Brussels EU” and labelled himself as a “kind of Prime Minister of Europe”, is revealed to have been a staunch defender of the Nazi legal tradition. It is implied that the creation of the EU represents the “third attempt to conquer Europe”, with underlying German machinations being the major catalysts for the speeding up of the processes surrounding European integration. This is confirmed by Mihăescu who maintains that “Germany is currently attempting in a seemingly peaceful way to implement what it did not succeed in doing between 1939 and 1945”.⁸²⁸ An even more extreme interpretation is put forth by Funar who maintains that the founding of the EU has the aim to destroy and help sink into oblivion the ancient Geto-Dacian language (contemporary Romanian) which is characterized as the progenitor of all European languages and of which the “higher-ups in Europe” are assumed to be envious.⁸²⁹ While Latin identity is thought to “probably be not valued enough within the European Union”, it is Eastern Europeans who are seen to bear the brunt of the criticisms for

⁸²⁶ *Greater Romania Party newspaper. Raoul Weiss: Civilizatii Europei de azi sunt taranii romani* (The true contemporary European civilization is best represented by Romanian farmers), June 2010.

⁸²⁷ Author’s interview with Vladimir Fârșirotu.

⁸²⁸ Author’s interview with Eugen Mihăescu.

⁸²⁹ Author’s interview with Gheorghe Funar.

everything that goes wrong in the Union and are forced to deal with the stigma of being inferior citizens.⁸³⁰

The drafting of the Treaty of Lisbon is assumed to be a consequence of a sustained effort by prominent political figures like Angela Merkel and Nicholas Sarkozy to deliberately make a mockery out of the will of the people, given that the Constitutional Treaty had been rejected in France and the Netherlands.⁸³¹ Thus, the envisioning of the EU as a somewhat German project does not tie in effortlessly with the Romanians' avowed preference for links with fellow countries that possess a Latin mentality.

Fârșirotu emphasizes that in 1995 Romania was the country with the “smallest amount of Euroscepticism possible” and the PRM reflected these sentiments during round-table discussions on European integration, but now this is no longer the case because the EU has been inclined to treat Romania as a second-class member and almost like a slave.⁸³²

Mihăescu echoes the sentiment of Romanians feeling excluded from Europe, with the rationale that Eastern European countries are not given the encouragements to recapture their past glories, but are viewed as little more than “excellent markets for the junk that Western Europe produces”.⁸³³ One salient point that is expressed in this context has to do with the professed belief that Romania cannot really rely on an influential country within the European Union which could be considered a true friend and guide it along the way. It is implied that Bulgaria has Germany as a major player that is sympathetic to it, while the Central European countries also have strong links with the Germans, but countries like Italy

⁸³⁰ Author's interview with Eugen Mihăescu.

⁸³¹ *Greater Romania Party newspaper. Radacinile Uniunii Europe* (The roots of the European Union), 27 July 2011.

⁸³² Author's interview with Vladimir Fârșirotu.

⁸³³ Author's interview with Eugen Mihăescu.

and Spain that are culturally similar to Romania are suffering from the economic crisis and are not in a position to shape proceedings within the EU as much as would be appropriate.⁸³⁴

These identity considerations also shape scepticism when it comes to the EU in more concrete ways. For instance, from the standpoint of PRM representatives, the distribution of EU funds in Romania has not proceeded smoothly. Due to the EU supranational order, rules in Romania regarding the distribution of money are gauged to have become much too complicated, as “in instances when money changes hands too many times, this helps create the right atmosphere for the thriving of corruption.”⁸³⁵ The underlying assumption is that in 2007 most Romanians were still not fully cognizant of the exact meaning of terms like “capital market” and “industrial competition” and were suddenly thrown in at the deep end of a new economic system not reflective of the Latin-like values.⁸³⁶ Essentially, living in a bureaucratic state is identified as a negative corollary of the Latin mentality and the EU has aggravated matters instead of providing a solution to the underlying issues.⁸³⁷ Furthermore, in the cultural realm, Mihăescu sees it as unfortunate that Romanian artists continue not to be too keen on “singularity”, preferring to mirror European art, much of which he argues is like “international marmalade”.⁸³⁸ Given that “real value could only emerge from national specificity”, it not unfathomable that the future could see Europe become a “bland and boring entity” whose inhabitants will be too similar to each other.⁸³⁹ Accordingly, there are plenty of reasons to feel moral panic when it comes to the EU, but not due to the pessimistic economic situation, but the “crisis of values” that is currently plaguing the Union.⁸⁴⁰ Nationalist parties

⁸³⁴ Author’s interview with Romeo Crașmariu.

⁸³⁵ Ibid.

⁸³⁶ Author’s interview with Ghiorghe Talau.

⁸³⁷ Author’s interview with Vladimir Fârșirotu.

⁸³⁸ Author’s interview with Eugen Mihăescu.

⁸³⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁰ Ibid.

are thus purported to be the only agents capable of defusing the threat of “amalgamation of national ethnographic traditions” that are associated with the European Union.⁸⁴¹

In essence, the South European or Latin locus of identity is still quite significant from the standpoint of those who consider themselves true Romanian patriots. This is why they display somewhat negative attitudes with regard to the elite endeavor of pursuing EU membership.

Moving on to the PVV party, only affinities with the Western frame of reference, including Western European and culturally Western “new world” countries tend to be displayed. Western identity is viewed as incorporating Judeo-Christian cultural elements and transcending the European one. The reasons for these sentiments are consistent with those explored in the country chapter on the Netherlands and are tied to the perceptions of cultural commonalities between the Dutch and other Westerners, as well as the maritime identity of the state. For instance, it is emphasized that geographical proximity does not necessarily breed familiarity and the mentality of Dutch people is much closer to the Canadians’ than to that of people like the Greeks. In addition, it is stressed that under normal circumstances it is not common for the Dutch to refer to themselves as Europeans.⁸⁴² Van Berkel maintains that “there is a shared history between Spain and the Netherlands, more than between Europe as a whole and the Netherlands”.⁸⁴³ Other PVV members also prefer to speak of common features between the Netherlands and specific countries in Europe like Spain and Germany rather than position the Netherlands within a European category of belonging.⁸⁴⁴ As will be explained in greater detail below, there is a strong tendency to regard Western and Eastern European

⁸⁴¹ Author’s interview with Petru Cojan.

⁸⁴² Author’s interview with Matthijs Janssen.

⁸⁴³ Author’s interview with Ad van Berkel.

⁸⁴⁴ Author’s interviews with various PVV members.

countries as quite distinct in terms of mentalities.⁸⁴⁵ Thus, the examination of PVV sentiments reveals that previous national coexistences and rivalries are viewed as having brought about some commonalities between Western countries, but there is no need to invoke Europe as a locus of identification.⁸⁴⁶

The very limited acceptance of the notion of an overarching European identity is perhaps best summed up by Van der Kammen:

“I do not believe in a European nationality, I believe in national identity. Europe is a continent and that is the way it should be. There should be no mentioning of the larger European nationality. Everyone’s own nationality puts one in a specific context. Someone from Germany – we already know that he or she is someone who lives in Europe.”⁸⁴⁷

In fact, many PVV members are also adamant that “Dutchness” is the only possible category of belonging, to the exclusion of any other like the generically Western ones.⁸⁴⁸ For instance, Van der Stoep regards Dutchness as hardly being dependent on interrelationships with other categories of meaning and maintains that trying to place Dutch identity within nested ones is a futile exercise.⁸⁴⁹ Somewhat along those lines, Koertenoven regards the positioning of Dutch national identity and the identification of its “natural allies” as more contested than in the French and British cases.⁸⁵⁰ Thus, the PVV generally finds the insistence on embedding the Netherlands within Europe as actually detracting from rather than adding anything to Dutch nationalism. This could partially explain why PVV members are quite confident that Dutch nationalism is more indomitable and more difficult to suppress

⁸⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁶ Author’s interview with Ad van Berkel.

⁸⁴⁷ Author’s interview with Patricia van der Kammen.

⁸⁴⁸ Author’s interviews with various PVV members.

⁸⁴⁹ Author’s interview with Daniël van der Stoep.

⁸⁵⁰ Author’s interview with Wim Kortenoeven.

than Eastern European nationalisms. There is a striking difference between the PVV interviewees' attitudes and the national pride displayed by some PRM and Ataka members, which is at least in part derived from their countries' contributions to the cultural enrichment of Europe (for instance, Funar maintains that the Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic area where Romania is located is the cradle of European civilization,⁸⁵¹ while Țîrnea exclaims: "I thank God that I was born a Christian, a Romanian and a European. These 3 gifts are like gold, myrrh and frankincense").⁸⁵²

A further testimony to the absence of affinity for a generic European (Union) identity in the PVV is provided by the party's "commemoration" of 9 May as Europe (Schuman) Day. The party members display the colors of the Dutch flag, paying tribute to the unity and independence of the Dutch state, but do not refer to any EU symbols or credit the EU for fostering a climate of tranquility within the continent. Instead, they emphasize that from this day on it has "forcefully provided the impetus for the creation of a United States of Europe".⁸⁵³

One salient issue seems to be the erosion of the Netherlands' historical role as a Western, imperial power. Although it might seem surprising that this is blamed on the EU, a number of related concerns emerge quite prominently. Some party members hint that the Netherlands is gradually becoming submerged on the international front due to the preeminence of the EU and is no longer in the spotlight in the same way it was in the past:

"You do not need the EU to put your name forward and to be highly appreciated in international relations; people do not see the Netherlands any more, they see the European

⁸⁵¹ Author's interview with Gheorghe Funar.

Union and its two faces – Sarkozy and Merkel, the Dutch foreign minister is virtually unknown throughout the world”.⁸⁵⁴

As the European Union is perceived to have brought about the erosion of the Netherlands’ international profile, the PVV members lament that their country is probably of less importance to the world compared to before. One manifestation of that is the current state of the Dutch economy. While it was previously evaluated as being the envy of others, the economic crisis in Europe is seen not only to have affected the country’s economic prospects, but also the reputation of the Netherlands as a whole in a negative fashion. The reasons for that are traceable to the club dynamics characterizing the EU and the general tendency of outsiders to "equate the general reputation of a club with that of its weakest link.”⁸⁵⁵

Drawing from the above outlined concerns, Pan-Europeanism is conceptualized as another exercise in hypocrisy on the part of the Union due to the fact that the propping up of less developed economies is being conducted under the wing of solidarity. In a sense, the fundamental issue from the PVV standpoint is that there has been a paradigm shift in mentalities since the 1950s and 1960s, with the current interests of member states (both Western and Eastern) in relation to the EU being solely premised on the reaping of economic dividends from it. The EU is essentially gauged to have transformed itself into a big state, but with no real understanding on the part of its members as to why they continue to be part of it.⁸⁵⁶

⁸⁵² Author’s interview with Livius Tîrnea.

⁸⁵³ *Voor Nederland* (For The Netherlands), Press release, 9 May 2011.

⁸⁵⁴ Author’s interview with Patricia van der Kammen.

⁸⁵⁵ Author’s interview with Ad van Berkel.

⁸⁵⁶ Ibid.

Thus, it is clear that the lack of willingness to identify with Europe on the part of the PVV magnifies the perceptions of economic losses due to EU policies in the economic realm and there is a corresponding concern that the Netherlands' reputation (beyond the EU) has been affected in a negative fashion. As a later section of this chapter will reveal, this emphasis on international reputation is consistent with the Netherlands' interest (from the PVV standpoint) to prioritize the establishment of close relations with the United States and emerging power blocs like ASEAN and MERCOSUR that are beyond the European continent.

To conclude: the PVV, unlike Ataka and Greater Romania, holds an extremely minimalist understanding of European identity. Europe is largely viewed as simply a geographical space or a continent. However, some PVV members believe strongly in their "Western" identity. Thus, in contrast to the Bulgarian and Romanian cases, the absence of important nesting identities that are in conflict with the EU project (due to the EU originating as Western community-building) would seemingly imply that the nature of European integration would not be associated with serious challenges to Dutch national identity. However, this is not completely true. Focus on the historical role of the Netherlands as an imperial power seems to provide a competing identification, which is at odds with the EU identity-building project (since the EU now eclipses the Netherlands on the world stage) and, as will be revealed in subsequent sections, there are also additional reasons why PVV members are sceptical about Euronationalism.

As for the attitudes expressed by the REP party, interviewees refrain from positioning Germany exclusively within the "Western" European camp with regard to their understanding of its identity, preferring to label Germany as a prototypically European

country that continues to be entrusted to serve as a bridge between the various countries on the European continent.⁸⁵⁷

However, some interviewees do appear to regard the potential strengthening of a European identity accompanied by the nature of the connected “nationalism” as a threatening development. As Gärtner puts it:

“Pan-European nationalism is a threat to all states...each country has its own mentality and these differences between the countries constitute the essence of Europeanness”.⁸⁵⁸

In a similar fashion to the sentiments expressed by the PVV members, Dagenbach emphasizes the “Europe of the Fatherlands” thesis, which maintains that countries in Europe could work together in domains ranging from the economic to the military one, but the final decisions should always rest with the nation-state and a country should be able to extricate itself from the whole process of its own volition (just like in the case of German provinces, which are not always commanded by Berlin when it comes to certain policy realms). He is thus wary that the type of false Pan-Europeanism persisting within the EU (through economic redistribution from affluent to impoverished states) has actually increased suspicions between European countries.⁸⁵⁹ In this context, Gärtner expresses his disappointment that countries like Greece still point fingers at the Germans rather than the EU when expressing dissatisfaction due to their countries’ precarious economic situation, so in that respect EU integration has actually reduced the prospects for cooperation between likeminded nationalist actors in different European countries.⁸⁶⁰ In this regard, the rhetoric of the REP party appears

⁸⁵⁷ Author’s interviews with various REP members.

⁸⁵⁸ Author’s interview with Johann Gärtner.

⁸⁵⁹ Author’s interview with Alfred Dagenbach.

⁸⁶⁰ Author’s interview with Johann Gärtner.

quite similar to that of former British foreign secretary Malcolm Rifkind who has urged for Europe to develop a “partnership of nations”, based on the democratic legitimacy of national parliaments rather than what he called “unloved” European institutions.⁸⁶¹ In a theoretical sense, the REP members’ attitudes towards Pan-Europeanism are largely reflective of the Gaullist vision, according to which a genuine European identity is to be resisted or in the worst case scenario accommodated as a “thin” identity overlaying deeply rooted national identities.⁸⁶²

Among REP members Pan-Europeanism is associated with Euroscepticism due to a multitude of negative impacts, most of them within economic domains. The high degree of sympathy for intra-European cooperation expressed by REP functionaries does not translate into a validation of the utility of the type of Pan-Europeanism promoted by the EU.

Hence the REP is not comparable to the other three parties, whose Euroscepticism derives partly from a preference for viewing national identity in the context of a larger, sub-European, cluster of nations, or, in the Dutch case, a Western/global identity. Overall, the opinions expressed by interviewees from all four parties regarding the linkages between national and more overarching identities are consistent with the history and the particular national trajectories of the countries in question, as examined in Chapter Three. However, the revelations pertaining to Pan-Europeanism and the potential threats emanating from it are somewhat more surprising and not always in line with the initial predictions.

⁸⁶¹ Sobisch, Andreas and Stefan Immerfall. *The Social Basis of European Citizenship* (1997), p. 166 (citing Malcolm Rifkind. Britain: in Europe but not in the Euro. A Permanent Partnership or an Interim Solution?, 2000, pp. 3-4).

Europeanization equated with redefining ‘Europe’ to include Islam/Eastern Europe

The discussion so far has centered on general populist understandings of the nature of the linkages between Pan-Europeanism and national identities, with the arguments raised concentrating on the relations between European countries. This section will focus on one significant facet of Pan-Europeanism that deserves close scrutiny: the EU’s ability to present perceived culturally incompatible countries or cultures as part of the European fold and thus affect core domains from the standpoint of nationalists. The cultural “others” empowered by Pan-Europeanism supposedly to the detriment of core EU countries within the Union include Eastern Europeans (in the case of the PVV) and Muslims. In the case of the latter group, there has been a historical tendency to use their religion (Islam) as a yardstick for defining the boundaries of “Europeanness.” The quip “Charlemagne, without Muhammad, would have been inconceivable” is reflective of the importance of the anti-Islamic frame as a useful tool to solidify the bonds between European nations.⁸⁶³ In particular, with reference to contemporary deliberations, the discussions surrounding Turkey’s possible accession have been depicted (according to Aaretti Siitonen, a member of the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs) as a “proxy for the wider debate on European identity”.⁸⁶⁴

Countering the spread of Islamism is a high salience endeavour for the Ataka party. A separate subsection of the Programme Scheme covers different techniques to prevent the “Islamization of Bulgaria”, among them tighter regulations when it comes to granting permission for construction of mosques, new bills that provide further recognition of the

⁸⁶² Kostakopoulou, Theodora. Citizenship, identity and immigration in the European Union – between past and future (2001), p. 34.

⁸⁶³ Davies, Norman. *Europe East and West: A Collection of Essays on European History* (2010), p. 187 (cited in Henri Pirenne. *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 2008, p. 234).

⁸⁶⁴ Guisan, Catherine. *A Political Theory of Identity in European Integration – Memory and Policies* (2013), p. 98.

Bulgarian language as the only official one in the country, as well as a law that recognizes the preeminence of the Eastern Orthodox tradition in Bulgaria.⁸⁶⁵

In that regard, it is hardly surprising that “true” European identity is viewed as exclusionary and unable to coexist with the Islamic one. Turkey is characterized as an intrinsically non-European country, as it lacks any European credentials or values.⁸⁶⁶ As Turkey occupies a small part of Europe and is culturally alien to Europe, its natural place is assumed to be the Middle East.⁸⁶⁷ Thus, Ataka feels that its preoccupation with reducing the influence of Islamism within Bulgarian society is not reciprocated by the EU-level structures. For instance, as mentioned previously, in the Bulgarian context the EU is accused of inappropriately extending the boundaries of Europeanism by attempting to include Turkey, making it an official candidate for EU membership, while purportedly neglecting truly European countries like Ukraine and Russia.⁸⁶⁸ Another problem associated with the EU influences is that, by compromising the reputation of Pan-Europeanism because of failed cultural initiatives at the EU level, the EU is seen as actually not conducive to strengthening intra-European bonds against Islam. For example, the EU is thought to promote secular rather than Christian values, thus potentially reducing the common ground between European people, which could be counterproductive in terms of them being able to provide a check on aggressive and expansionist Islamism. In this context, Punchev cites Switzerland as an example of non-EU member that has been quite adept at keeping its Christian roots intact (by enforcing a minaret ban) and its commitment to Pan-Europeanist values is assumed to have increased in recent years due to its non-membership in the EU’s supranational community.⁸⁶⁹

⁸⁶⁵ 20 точки на партия Атака (20 Points of the Ataka Party).

⁸⁶⁶ Author’s interviews with various Ataka members.

⁸⁶⁷ Author’s interview with Mario Punchev.

⁸⁶⁸ Author’s interviews with various Ataka members.

In sharp contrast to the functionaries from the other three parties, PRM members do not generally regard European identity as mutually exclusive with the Turkish one. A degree of solidarity with Turkey is displayed due to the assumption that Turkey (just like Romania) tends to be unfairly scapegoated and treated like an “other” by the EU.⁸⁷⁰ PRM politicians assert that any opposition to Turkish membership is not emanating from within Romania, but is the work of the major players like the Netherlands and France.⁸⁷¹ For instance, Funar maintains that the potential membership of Turkey will not affect Romanian national interests in a negative fashion and does not regard the EU’s willingness to embrace Turkey as a betrayal of the “true ancient history of Europe”.⁸⁷² Similarly, Fârșirotu draws attention to the common roots of Abrahamic religions and the intricate similarities between Christianity, Islam and Judaism, as all of these religions have originated together.⁸⁷³ Europeanism is sometimes juxtaposed against Orientalism, with a negative connotation attached to the latter, but the term appears to be used to characterize the “national character” of the Hungarians (rather than the Turks) in a negative fashion.⁸⁷⁴ The attitudes of PRM politicians towards Turkey are somewhat surprising given that the party models itself on the right-wing Romanian nationalists who gained traction in the country during the interwar years and were ill-disposed towards any attempts to minimize the cultural differences between Romania and Turkey (as mentioned in the Romanian section of Chapter Three). Thus, Pan-Europeanism as promoted by the EU does not really affect the party members’ opinions on Islamism within the Romanian context.

⁸⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁷⁰ Author’s interview with Romeo Crașmariu.

⁸⁷¹ Author’s interviews with various PRM members.

⁸⁷² Author’s interview with Gheorghe Funar.

⁸⁷³ Author’s interview with Vladimir Fârșirotu.

⁸⁷⁴ *RTV Net. Maghiarii din Har-Cov sarbatoresc Noua An si pe ora Ungariei* (Hungarians in Harcov celebrate New Year like those in Hungary), 29 December 2011.

In addition to a staunch opposition to Turkey entering the supranational community, the PVV expresses concerns pertaining to the “slippery slope” phenomenon (since a potential Turkish accession is seen as likely to encourage countries like Algeria and Morocco to follow suit and also submit an application for membership). For instance, the party expresses alarm at the proposal of Commissioner Stefan Füle that the EU is to open its internal market to Maghreb countries, stressing that cooperation between European and North African states should not go beyond free trade.⁸⁷⁵

From the standpoint of the party, Pan-Europeanism is depicted as especially threatening because of the issues it creates when it comes to opposing Islamization in a general sense, not only pertaining to Turkey or the Arab states. Geert Wilders has referred to the notion of “Europeanization” in some of his speeches, describing it as a “major threat”. He defines “Europeanization” as an ideology which staunchly defends the merging of sovereign nation-states into a Pan-European federation or super-state as a false guarantee against the emergence of a totalitarian regime.⁸⁷⁶ The concern is that legally and politically the Netherlands could become a province in the European super state, were a European constitution to be adopted.⁸⁷⁷ In relation to the subject at hand, Wilders maintains that the emphasis on “uniformity” (implying the reduced importance of national identities at the expense of an overarching religion, achieved mainly through violent conquest) is one of the inherent traits of Islam. Following a convoluted logic, he advocates this as another reason why nation-states within Europe should shun “grand EU designs”:

⁸⁷⁵ Opening the internal market to Africa, PVV Parliamentary question, 28 April 2011.

⁸⁷⁶ Wilders, Geert. Berlin Speech, 3 September 2011.

⁸⁷⁷ Wilders, Geert. Rotterdam speech, 25 March 2006.

“Uniformity is not characteristic of the West; it is a feature of Islam, which eradicated the national identities of people it conquered while striving to create a supranational Caliphate. Islam threatens the survival of all free people”.⁸⁷⁸

With a particular reference to the Dutch state and Islamic values, Arabist Hans Jansen (whose writings have laid the groundwork with regard to altering Wilders’ views on Islam, specifically pushing him to attach the label of a “totalitarian ideology” to it),⁸⁷⁹ refers to the EU having fundamentally altered the mentality of Dutch people and having made them less aware of their strong willpower:

“Before the Netherlands became part of the European multicultural utopian state, this country actually knew at least three mottos – “I will stand firm”, “[I will] struggle and emerge”, “[I will] be loyal to the fatherland”.⁸⁸⁰

In essence, a European Union consisting of countries lacking strong national identities is deemed likely to have citizens that are less politically active in opposing the spread of Islam. The future evolution of the EU system of governance could cause the European supranational community to begin to resemble an Islamic system of government. Thus, by weaving together a number of narratives pertaining to Islam, Wilders and his ideologues introduce a more marked symbolic component to the PVV grievances in relation to the EU, characterizing the EU project as serving to emasculate national identity and having the means to destroy certain national pillars. The PVV leader’s (as well as some other PVV members’) tendency to favor the United States in the realm of geopolitics whenever its principal aims

⁸⁷⁸ Wilders, Geert. *Marked for Death – Islam’s war against the West and me* (2012), p. 216.

⁸⁷⁹ Vossen, Koen. *Populism in the Netherlands after Fortuyn: Rita Verdonk and Geert Wilders Compared* (2010), p. 27.

⁸⁸⁰ Jansen, Hans. Speech at the book launch “*The Pseudoelite of the Counterfeiters*” (29 September 2010).

clash with those of the EU (discussed later in this chapter) could also be attributed to his belief that the USA constitutes a potentially more important bulwark against Islamization. It is worth noting that experts on Islam and Turkey like Serbian philologist and orientalist Darko Tanasković actually take the opposite view, characterizing the US political establishment as being on average more receptive to Turkey than its European (EU) counterpart, maintaining that “US political thought” tends to be unreasonably optimistic regarding Turkey’s ability and willingness to provide a check on the expansion of radical Islam.⁸⁸¹

The REP party representatives also profess unqualified opposition to Turkey entering the Union (with only Dagenbach expressing some degree of sympathy for the Kemalist principles and a belief in the potential of Turkey to go back to its days as a secular state). The EU’s tendency to regard Turkey as a viable candidate for membership is an example of the unwelcome tendency of supranational level officials to overstretch the concept of Europeanness to a degree that it is rendered meaningless.⁸⁸²

As for anti-East European attitudes in Western Europe: a negative attitude to newly defined super order European solidarities is also very apparent in PVV attitudes towards EU eastern enlargement. ‘Europe’ as redefined after eastwards enlargement is associated with crime, intolerance and corruption, lowering standards of behaviour across the continent. Such views among PVV members are reflective of the recent swing towards anti-Polish sentiment among the party hierarchy. The controversial PVV website that was launched in early 2012 (in order to collect Dutch complaints against the “criminal” behavior of citizens of CEE countries residing in the Netherlands) resulted in an open letter written by ambassadors of

⁸⁸¹ Tanasković, Darko. *Неоосманизмът. Турция се връща на Балканите (Neo-Ottomanism. Turkey returns to the Balkans)*

these countries addressed to Dutch political party leaders and has generated some discussion on the EU level.

All the party members interviewed staunchly oppose any further enlargements of the EU. The accession of new member states is associated with the “further loss of control” from the standpoint of the Netherlands.⁸⁸³ This is attributable to the tendency to equate the expansion of the EU’s geographical boundaries with the ushering in of cyclical processes, which create uneven exchanges between “more developed” and “less developed” European countries. It is emphasized that the EU never demonstrated a capacity to learn from the economic debacle as a result of the lowering of standards when it came to giving the green light for the membership of Greece, Spain and Portugal.⁸⁸⁴

In this regard, PVV members cite statistics pertaining to the rise of organized crime in Western European countries and its corresponding decrease in CEE states. These trends are supposedly seen to have become particularly evident in the aftermath of the 2004 and 2007 enlargements.⁸⁸⁵ In the case of The Hague, the significant upsurge in crime attributed to CEE nationals is also gauged to have contributed to environmental stress.⁸⁸⁶

Issues pertaining to Eastern European countries have a special salience in relation to Pan-Europeanism because of the perceived incompatibility in mentalities. In addition to their countries lacking the proper economic acumen and level of development, Bulgarians and Romanians are assumed to have picked up certain traits that separate them from Western Europe due to the long periods of time spent under the Russian sphere of influence. It is

(2010), pp. 163-164.

⁸⁸² Author’s interviews with various REP members.

⁸⁸³ *Standpunten PVV 2012 (Geen uitbreiding)* (PVV viewpoints 2012 (No to enlargement)).

⁸⁸⁴ Author’s interviews with various PVV members.

⁸⁸⁵ *PVV wil Haags Anvalsplan bestrijding gevolgen stijgende criminaliteit MOE-lander* (PVV wants new plan to help combat the rise in crime attributable to CEE countries’ nationals), 2012.

emphasized that given that there is still a divide between Western and Eastern Germany, it would not be far-fetched to assume that the gulf between Western and Eastern Europe is enormous. As elucidated by Van der Stoep: “It is not only about money, you know, you need to have a certain mentality before you become a member if trouble is to be avoided.”⁸⁸⁷

The problem of conflicting mentalities and moralities also conjures up practical conundrums when PVV members are forced to operate on the EU level. PVV representatives (particularly those at the higher levels) are likely to categorically discount the possibility of sustained cooperation with similarly minded parties from Eastern European countries. This is mostly due to the PVV’s perception that even nationalist-minded Eurosceptic parties from the CEE region are likely to react aggressively to the suggestion that their country should not be a member of the EU and also due to the PVV’s belief that there is a lack of an overlap when it comes to core values.

Nationalist parties from Eastern Europe are regarded as anti-Semitic and brash in their rhetoric. In particular, Van der Stoep recalls his embarrassment and the inability to have a constructive conversation when meeting with a Bulgarian EP member from Ataka due to the “unbelievably high levels of anti-Semitism displayed by the person in question”.⁸⁸⁸ Thus, communication failures are decried as an obstacle to any PVV alliance with CEE populists⁸⁸⁹ and some members like Kortenoeven raise doubts whether the so-called “Eurosceptics” in Eastern Europe are actually truly opposed to their country’s EU membership.⁸⁹⁰ Similarly, Madlener affirms that on many occasions nationalist parties from CEE states “bring it upon themselves” (referring to their imposed isolation from mainstream parties in their own

⁸⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸⁸ Author’s interview with Daniël van der Stoep.

⁸⁸⁹ Author’s interviews with various PVV members.

countries) due to the radicalism in their pronouncements and inability to tread carefully around issues affecting minorities.⁸⁹¹ The PVV's affinity for Judeo-Christian values does not translate into supportive attitudes towards Serbia in relation to the Kosovo issue (unlike the positions of some of their colleagues from other Western European parties that have nationalist credentials), as displaying solidarity with Serbia implies that lip service will be paid to radicalism.⁸⁹²

Van der Stoep sums up the issue of Eastern Europeans and Western Europeans not being on the same wavelength:

“In Eastern Europe the extremes have always been more extreme and this has been accepted. Like in Africa, there have been imposed borders in the case of certain nationalities [in the eastern part of the continent] and this has created very combustible situations. In Western countries, the roots of nationalist concern are different and are tied to relatively recent developments like the unwelcome promotion of multiculturalism”.⁸⁹³

In this regard, a PVV press release appears to take issue with the “ethnic ties” or primordialist principle, based on which Bulgarian citizenship is awarded (referring to the at times speedy procedures surrounding the granting of Bulgarian citizenship to individuals of Bulgarian descent born in Macedonia, Moldova and Ukraine).⁸⁹⁴ Thus, the PVV implicitly appears to give the nod to the civic form of nationalism over the ethnic one, expressing suspicion over the viability of the *jus sanguinis* principle, on which the granting of Bulgarian citizenship seems to be premised.

⁸⁹⁰ Author's interview with Wim Kortenoeven.

⁸⁹¹ Author's interview with Barry Madlener.

⁸⁹² Ibid.

⁸⁹³ Author's interview with Daniël van der Stoep.

The presumed inability of Eastern Europeans to diligently exercise immigration control is also tied by PVV members to the supposedly stark differences in mentalities with Western Europeans, especially with regard to the wide prevalence of corruption. As corruption is conceptualized as intrinsic to the upper echelons of society in such countries, it is deemed nonsensical to trust these states' policy-makers in the Schengen area.⁸⁹⁵ Van der Stoep recalls the accusations he faced of being "too hard on Poles" when visiting the country while at the same time Polish negative attitudes towards Belarusian illegals are thought to have been swept under the carpet by his Polish hosts.⁸⁹⁶

While surveys regarding levels of trust between EU member countries generally suggest that distrust is attributable to a lack of confidence in a country's economic prowess rather than an inherent lack of trustfulness of the inhabitants,⁸⁹⁷ from the standpoint of the PVV the latter dimension appears to be at least as salient as (if not more so) than the economic one.

Rather paradoxically, PVV Euroscepticism and hostility to Europeanization (in the sense of broadening the definition of Europe) derives partly from a perception that East Europeans have not managed to Europeanise (in the sense of internalizing values). Some PVV press releases corroborate the impression that the PVV does not view certain EU officials from "new" member states as having sufficiently internalized the core values of the "Union" because of certain undesirable elements inherent in their nationalism. For instance, the EU budget commissioner Janusz Lewandowski is criticised for statements made during a Polish election campaign in connection with the provision of EU subsidies to Poland. Essentially, the national interest is seen to tactlessly take precedence over the interests of all

⁸⁹⁴ *Bulgarije: 'toegangspoort' tot de EU* (Bulgaria: "gateway" to the EU), 8 December 2011.

⁸⁹⁵ Author's interview with Daniël van der Stoep.

⁸⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁷ Sobisch, Andreas and Stefan Immerfall. *The Social Basis of European Citizenship* (1997), p. 159.

the member states of the Union and the PVV severely criticizes the nationalist undercurrents visible in the rhetoric of certain EU officials from CEE states.⁸⁹⁸ In addition, CEE states like Romania are deemed more likely to impulsively resort to unilateral actions, infringing the EU regulations, as evidenced by the PVV's sharp critique of the Romanian authorities' temporary refusal to allow for the transport of Dutch flowers into Romania, arguably as a way to get back at the Dutch government due to their decision to refrain from admitting the Balkan state into the Schengen area.⁸⁹⁹

The EU permissiveness towards Eastern Europeans due to allegedly ill-conceived Pan-European sentiments is best demonstrated in the realm of environmental issues, where the Netherlands has the reputation as one of the most progressive and environmentally friendly EU member states. For example, incredulity was expressed that at the Durban environmental conference Poland was the EU delegation leader despite the country's poor environmental record and reliance on outdated energy sources.⁹⁰⁰ Thus, to the PVV it hardly comes as a surprise that the EU supposedly suffers legitimacy losses in international relations due to including Eastern Europeans within its fold and pretending that they possess the same pedigree as Western Europeans.⁹⁰¹ If the PVV is to consider countenancing pro-Europeanism, this would only be in the sense of accepting a "functional European identity" (in which the EU is conceptualized as an efficient problem-solver),⁹⁰² but from their standpoint even the EU's capacity to achieve basic economic or environmental aims has now been compromised, in part due to the EU becoming a "free for all" club that indulges the whims of the states that are on the periphery of the continent. This Dutch pragmatism and suspicion of unnecessary

⁸⁹⁸ *EP voorzitter weigert vragen PVV europarlements lid* (EP chairman refuses to answer questions from the PVV delegation leader in EP), 2011.

⁸⁹⁹ Romanian blockade of the transportation of flowers, PVV Parliamentary question, 29 September 2011.

⁹⁰⁰ Author's interview with Daniël van der Stoep.

⁹⁰¹ Ibid.

posturing and obfuscation with regard to administrative matters also manifested itself during the 2005 referendum on the EU Constitution. It has been stipulated that one of the reasons for the rejection of the proposed European Constitution was due to its generic and flowery language, which made it difficult to reconcile with the much more parsimonious Dutch constitution.⁹⁰³ Along those lines, Janssen laments that the EU has not managed to evade the trap of Parkinson's Law - because of its swelling bureaucracy and attempts to bring an inordinate number of areas of human activity under its wing, it is deemed to be no longer faithful to its original vocation.⁹⁰⁴ In essence, from the standpoint of the PVV, in terms of measurable performance, the EU has continued to deteriorate in recent years.

The cultural incompatibility annoyance factor in relation to Pan-Europeanism and Eastern Europeans generally seems to be lacking among the REP members. While the REP deems it essential to slow down the process of enlargement,⁹⁰⁵ the existence of ingrained mentalities within certain countries in Europe is only brought up in relation to economic matters, but is played down with regard to cultural differences or propensity to engage in corruption. The principal concerns voiced by interviewees are that EU enlargement and Schengen have encouraged the spread of criminal networks from Eastern Europe.⁹⁰⁶ REP party documents identify a number of additional grievances in relation to Eastern Europe. In previous years, there was some opposition expressed towards the EU membership of Central European countries due to "historical baggage" considerations – in the case of the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the repudiation of the Beneš decrees (covering the post-WWII resettlement and expulsion of Germans within these countries) was viewed as a precondition

⁹⁰² Kostakopoulou, Theodora. *Citizenship, identity and immigration in the European Union – between past and future* (2001), p. 33.

⁹⁰³ Toonen, Theo, Bernard Steunenberg and Wim Voermans. *Saying No to a European Constitution: Dutch Revolt, Enigma or Pragmatism?* (2005), p 13.

⁹⁰⁴ Author's interview with Matthijs Janssen.

⁹⁰⁵ Author's interview with various REP members.

for their membership in the Union by the party functionaries.⁹⁰⁷ Similarly, the Polish state is urged to officially recognize that its past governments have implemented policies resulting in the persecution of German civilians.⁹⁰⁸

There is no indication that Eastern Europeans appear to invoke significant threat perceptions since their entry into the Union because of value incongruence and divergent mentalities. Eastern European countries are characterized as “practically integrated” and much more capable of proper integration than Turkey, as they are deemed to possess essentially the same culture as the Germans.⁹⁰⁹ There is also the prominent sentiment displayed that Eastern Europeans are an integral part of the Union and for this reason the contention is that it does not make sense to confine membership exclusively to Western Europe, especially given that (at time of interview) countries like Croatia were gauged to be almost fully prepared for membership.⁹¹⁰

The sympathy for Eastern European members also manifests itself in the nature of the discourses pertaining to practical cooperation with Eastern European parties. The REP members view it as unfortunate that their party is currently not too successful in an electoral sense or politically influential in the domestic arena to be of much use to parties in Eastern Europe:

“We are not really attractive to Eastern European parties, because our results during the EP elections were far from impressive...however, Germany is a country that is located at the

⁹⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁰⁷ *Bundesparteiprogramm der Republikaner* (Parliament party programme of die Republikaner) (2011), pp. 14-15.

⁹⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 16.

⁹⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁹¹⁰ Author’s interview with Andreas Burkhardt.

heart of Europe, it is still likely to play a significant role at some point in the future if a coalition of right-wing parties with a commitment to democracy is to be established in the European Parliament.”⁹¹¹

A number of explanations could account for the REP’s sympathetic stance towards Eastern Europeans. On the one hand, Germany’s own experience of relatively late democratization compared to other Western European countries may explain their tendency to view the impacts of the communist legacy on Eastern European societies as reversible and their mentalities as “redeemable”. As implied above, German patriots’ continental (rather than Atlanticist) orientation and ethnicized conception of nationalism could also compel them to seek common ground and identify with Eastern Europeans.⁹¹² In a practical sense, Germany has been one of the countries with a high share of trade with Central and Eastern European states and even prior to enlargement there were strong expectations that CEE states would be supportive of Germany when it came to decision-making within the EU structures, while the Netherlands did not expect any significant benefits from the enlargement to the East.⁹¹³

In addition, it has to be noted that while Germany has pursued a similar course to the Netherlands in terms of purging discussions on race from mainstream discourses,⁹¹⁴ “colonial fantasies” are not deemed to have affected race relations in Germany⁹¹⁵ and the place of Germany’s “colonial other” has at times been occupied by Eastern European ethnicities like Poles rather than “visible minorities”.⁹¹⁶ Thus, for a party that is attempting to “clean its house” and sever connections with the extreme right like the NPD, the unwillingness to

⁹¹¹ Author’s interview with Johann Gärtner.

⁹¹² Ibid, pp. 148-149.

⁹¹³ Schimmelfennig, Frank. *The Community Trap: Liberal Norms, Rhetorical Action and the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union* (2001), p. 53.

⁹¹⁴ Müller, Anne Ulrike. *Far Away So Close: Race, Whiteness, and German Identity* (2011), p. 622.

⁹¹⁵ Ibid, p. 621.

engage in anti-Eastern European discourses also makes sense from a strategic standpoint given the legacy of the Holocaust in Germany in relation to Eastern European groups like Poles and Russians. Perhaps the REP party leader's contention that Germany needs inspiration from "Eastern European battlegrounds" in order to restoke the fires of its own nationalism is another factor explaining the tendency to view Germany's struggles as equivalent to those of the Eastern Europeans.⁹¹⁷ On the contrary, the PVV members do not in any way concede that Dutch nationalism could be considered impotent and do not believe that they could learn anything useful from their Eastern European counterparts.⁹¹⁸

Hostility to a Common Foreign and Security Policy

The Pan-European frame could be confined to symbolic identity considerations, but in accordance with the alternative definitions presented in Chapter Two, it also encompasses a geopolitical dimension, in the sense of an elevated and unified profile of the EU in international affairs, perhaps enabling it to adopt a more independent foreign policy course when it comes to the United States.

With regard to Ataka, Alexandrov believes that a strong EU could theoretically function as a buffer against the United States. Along these same lines, most of the Ataka interviewees expressed hostility towards the United States for sowing the seeds of discord between Bulgaria and Russia and causing Bulgaria to incur too much expenditure due to NATO embroilment in far off military conflicts.⁹¹⁹ The PRM also appears to display trust in the EU as a geopolitical actor that is lacking when the USA is discussed, as manifested in some of

⁹¹⁶ Ibid, p. 640.

⁹¹⁷ Author's interview with Rolf Schlierer.

⁹¹⁸ Author's interviews with various PVV members.

⁹¹⁹ Author's interviews with various Ataka members.

Tudor's pronouncements. For example, the party leader took umbrage at purportedly unwelcome interferences by Mark Gitenstein (US ambassador to Romania) in the internal affairs of Romania (fears are expressed that Romania could become another "colony" or "Guantanamo camp") and threatens to involve the European Parliament.⁹²⁰ Tudor has also generally displayed a lack of trust in US judgments in the geopolitical realm.⁹²¹ Similarly, other PRM members like Enăşoae and Cojan argue that "the United States should not interfere with European interests".⁹²² The section dealing with pan-national identifications reached the conclusion that despite the scepticism regarding EU membership, it retains its importance in the eyes of the CEE nationalist-populists as a validation of the other (established) countries' acceptance of the European credentials of their states. Thus, it is not surprising that anti-Americanism trumps anti-European Union sentiment despite the many complaints regarding the purported unequal treatment of Bulgaria and Romania on the EU level and what has been surmised as the "United States' higher degree of enthusiasm than the "EU average" when it came to the possibility of enlargement to the East".⁹²³

By contrast, PVV members maintain that striving for a unified EU foreign policy is futile due to the perception of vastly divergent aims and priorities of the different EU member states (for example, because of the UK's Atlantic orientation and France's interest in Middle Eastern affairs).⁹²⁴ In addition, the potential strengthening of the EU as a geopolitical actor is viewed with suspicion, as the European supranational community appears to be less trusted as an international actor than the United States. There is marked sympathy expressed for the United States, as evidenced in Janssen's pronouncements which emphasize the durable links

⁹²⁰ Corneliu Vadim Tudor, Policy note, 19 January 2012.

⁹²¹ Tudor, Corneliu Vadim. Aphorisms, pp. 25, 82.

⁹²² Author's interviews with Ioan Enăşoae and Petru Cojan.

⁹²³ Hajdiniak, Marko, Maia Koseva and Antonina Zheliazkova. *Модерност и традиция: европейско и национално в България* (Modernity and tradition: the European and the national in Bulgaria) (2012), p. 40.

⁹²⁴ Author's interviews with various PVV members.

between the Netherlands and the USA, with cooperation with the States conceptualized as “better serving Dutch interests than the fostering of ties with other countries in the EU.”⁹²⁵

Wilders characterizes his views on the United States as follows: “I proudly regard myself as one of the most pro-American political figures in the Netherlands and one of the biggest Dutch admirers of the American spirit.”⁹²⁶ Madlener contends that it would be offensive (from a Dutch nationalist standpoint) to display even a tinge of support for an EU that portrays itself as a geopolitical challenger to the USA and characterizes his views as “almost unconditionally supportive of the States”.⁹²⁷

Not surprisingly, the PVV takes the side of the USA and China when it comes to the controversies generated by the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme, citing the unacceptable violations of other countries’ national sovereignty (due to the possibility that foreign airlines flying outside of EU space could be taxed) and the negative impacts on the competitiveness of national airline industries within EU states.⁹²⁸ PVV MEPs also maintain that the EU political elites are committed to the creation of a United States of Europe with a European president (in the conventional sense). In their view, the underlying philosophy is to establish a powerful bloc, which could enable European countries to provide a check on the political and economic ambitions of China and the United States. However, the PVV regard such grand designs and a deepening of the Union as completely unnecessary from the perspective of the Netherlands.⁹²⁹

⁹²⁵ Author’s interview with Matthijs Janssen.

⁹²⁶ Wilders, Geert. *Marked for Death – Islam’s war against the West and me* (2012), p. 136.

⁹²⁷ Author’s interview with Barry Madlener.

⁹²⁸ *Barroso, voorkom een handelsoorlog* ([Mr.] Barroso, if you could please make sure to avoid a trade war), PVV Letter to Jose Manuel Barroso, 20 December 2011.

⁹²⁹ *Sneuveld de Euro...?* (Will the euro be destroyed?) (unspecified date 2010, Press release).

Some recent studies have revealed that elites in founding EU member states (like Belgium and Germany) are much more likely to consider close relationships with the United States to be a threat to the cohesion of the EU than are elites in new EU member states (like the Czech Republic and Slovakia).⁹³⁰ Arguably, the strongly pro-American sentiments of PVV members could be interpreted as not only an internalisation of the charismatic party leader's own attitudes, but also a way to challenge the still reigning somewhat pro-EU attitudes among Dutch elites.

As for the REP deliberations on the topic of geopolitics, the party representatives generally do not divulge any clear preferences when it comes to choosing between close foreign policy alignments with the EU or the United States:

“The EU is not needed as a counterweight to the United States...we should be open to trade with the States [historically our business relations have been excellent] and not necessarily privilege other EU states when it comes to trade relations.”⁹³¹

There is a stress on occupying the golden middle and choosing according to German national interests in specific domains on whether to pursue closer cooperation with the United States or EU neighbours.⁹³² At this stage, the EU is gauged to be relatively impotent in foreign policy matters, as proven by the splits in opinion between [Eastern and Western] countries before the Iraq War.⁹³³ In this regard, it is frequently emphasized that the United States does not really have any reason to take the EU seriously [as a military entity].⁹³⁴ It is also pointed out that a more isolationist stance when it comes to German foreign policy may

⁹³⁰ Matonyte, Irminda and Vaidas Morkevičius. *Threat Perception and European Identity Building: the Case of Elites in Belgium, Germany, Lithuania and Poland* (2009), p. 977.

⁹³¹ Author's interview with Johann Gärtner.

⁹³² Author's interview with Andreas Burkhardt.

⁹³³ Author's interview with Rolf Schlierer.

⁹³⁴ Author's interviews with various REP members.

be advisable, especially when it comes to exercising “hard power”.⁹³⁵ While there is a preference to engage in “soft power” exercises and shun military operations that do not concern the immediate geographical neighbourhood [of Germany], this does not manifest itself in some form of anti-Americanism.⁹³⁶ Thus, unlike in the Dutch case, the pan-European frame in geopolitics is considered capable of successfully coexisting with the mildly pro-American one.⁹³⁷ This “middle ground” approach is also maintained in relation to economic issues, with a strong “euro” regarded as “theoretically likely to represent a nice alternative to the US dollar”, though it is also stressed that this is far from absolutely necessary or economically viable at this point in time.⁹³⁸

Constraints on the expression of nationalism and ostracism by mainstream parties

The narratives covered up to this point dealt with the interplay between European and national identities within the framework of the European Union. The opinions and arguments expressed largely drew on symbolic aspects and historical analogies. The next section looks at the parties’ perceptions of actual constraints on nationalism emanating from the EU level, in a substantive rather than a largely symbolic sense. Thus, this part provides a glimpse into the connection between norms deriving from EU membership and interviewees’ perceptions that behaviour is constrained by the need for “political correctness” as well as the difficulty of finding coalition partners in an EU context where other parties are shy of associating themselves with nationalists.

⁹³⁵ Author’s interview with Alexander von Drage.

⁹³⁶ Author’s interviews with various REP members.

⁹³⁷ Ibid.

Author’s interviews with Rolf Schlierer and Johann Gärtner.

Framing of nationalism-related issues, dissemination of information on the EU, party coalition dynamics (Bulgaria)

To Ataka, Pan-Europeanism is conceptualized as an annoyance, as it is associated with unnecessary moralizing on the part of the EU when it comes to the nation-state. It is regarded as a way to attack traditional nationalism by creating an impotent substitute. This is believed to be inappropriate because countries do not actually need to be saved from “standard nationalism”. In essence, the pessimism regarding conventional nationalism is deemed unwarranted, as countries within Europe no longer hold on to the stereotypes of the past when interacting with fellow states and traditional nationalism is not a zero-sum game between states.⁹³⁹

“Political correctness” in relation to the way the topic of nationalism is approached and discussed in Bulgaria is generally not attributed to any direct influences emanating from EU, but is seen to be re-inforced by the EU bias of the political elite and media. Carefulness to avoid appearing nationalistic is generally viewed as an ever-present feature of the Bulgarian political landscape since the end of communism. Ataka members believe that other Bulgarian politicians are wary of nationalism due to the “misconception” that the Nazis were nationalists, so they are assumed to tread carefully around such issues.⁹⁴⁰ They say that even prior to EU accession in 2007 regular Bulgarians were extremely guarded about making pronouncements of a nationalist nature and this trend has continued under the wing of the EU.⁹⁴¹ The party functionaries (with one exception) maintain that the media in Bulgaria display a markedly pro-EU bias. One of the main problems – in their eyes - is that while there is free speech on paper, all the media outlets sing the same tune and exercise self-censorship,

⁹³⁹ Author’s interview with Adrian Asenov.

⁹⁴⁰ Author’s interview with Shavel S.

⁹⁴¹ Author’s interviews with various Ataka members.

which also means that they portray the EU through rose-tinted spectacles.⁹⁴² The reason for the perceived overemphasis on reporting about the positive features of the EU is that the Bulgarian elites themselves encourage such one-sided reporting. In addition, the same elites are thought to sacrifice patriotism for subservience to the EU.⁹⁴³ Hence the media are believed to have contributed towards the entrenchment of the perception that nationalism is a bad and dangerous ideology.⁹⁴⁴

In terms of conventions regarding the deliberations on the role of the nation-state, the EU is believed to have affected the nature of political discussions in an indirect way due to being used as a blueprint by the mainstream parties in Bulgaria. One example of that is the GERB party's manifesto and its emphasis on "achieving economic development according to European standards" coupled with the lack of any mention of national interests.⁹⁴⁵

The media *cordon sanitaire* imposed on the party is regarded as being of paramount importance and in this regard the EU's influence is only indirect.⁹⁴⁶ However, the EU is gauged to have played its part in isolating Ataka within the Bulgarian political system. Although Bulgarian mainstream parties are in any case assumed to have a national disposition not to cooperate with nationalists because of the abovementioned stigma attached to patriotism,⁹⁴⁷ Alexandrov maintains that during the course of 2009 there were a number of proclamations made by EU officials along the lines that it would be "shameful" for GERB to cooperate with Ataka. In his view, this muzzling of nationalists at the EU level is a universal phenomenon, as evidenced by the EU's inaction on legislation in France (existing since 1982) that aims to reduce the number of representatives that the *Front National* could have within

⁹⁴² Ibid.

⁹⁴³ Author's interview with Ventsislav Lakov.

⁹⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁴⁵ Author's interview with Nikolay Alexandrov.

⁹⁴⁶ Author's interview with Nikolay Pehlivanov.

⁹⁴⁷ Ibid.

the French Parliament.⁹⁴⁸ Punchev, however, ascribes a degree of autonomy to European party families, who are most to blame for ostracising nationalists, and does not seem to regard EU bodies like the Commission or Parliament as negatively disposed towards nationalism:

“In 2006 and 2007 there were many attempts to impose a quarantine line on us...the fault for that was not of the EU as an institution, but of the European party families like PES, who clearly pressured Bulgarian parties to be careful with regard to their choice of allies. However, we have now earned ourselves a proper place within Bulgarian political circles and factions like GERB realize that we are valuable partners. We do not take offence when parties refuse to consider us as coalition partners, it is simply a natural part of politics”.⁹⁴⁹

Framing of nationalism-related issues, dissemination of information on the EU, party coalition dynamics (Romania)

PRM members generally tend to downplay actual EU-level constraints on nationalism and the indirect normative influences of the EU on Romanian politics. As in the Bulgarian context, PRM politicians trace the Romanians’ general reluctance to engage in overt displays of nationalism to the decade prior to the country’s membership in the EU:

“After so-called revolution in 1989, it was in 1991 that I had an interesting experience – a Romanian national holiday was being celebrated in one of our major cities and the only Romanian national flag on display was perched on the window sill of a clothing store.”⁹⁵⁰

⁹⁴⁸ Author’s interview with Nikolay Alexandrov.

⁹⁴⁹ Author’s interview with Mario Punchev.

It is also implied that when one discusses patriotism in Romania, there is always the risk of being labelled an extremist and it is assumed that the situation is even worse than in Germany in that respect.⁹⁵¹ It is emphasized that Romanian intellectuals reinforce the negative stigma attached to nationalism and serve to create false parallels between patriotism and opposition to the EU.⁹⁵² Thus, in an indirect way, the EU stifles nationalist expression, as it provides ammunition to the intellectuals to unfavorably compare patriotism with belonging to the supranational community. Țîrnea maintains that most of the Romanian parties do not possess any kind of patriotism or at best a subdued one and it has been fashionable even for the politicians themselves to “make fun of Romania” both before and after accession.⁹⁵³ Talau echoes this sentiment:

“I do not know the degree of our nationalism when we entered [the European Union]. Romanian nationalism already lost its way and became outmoded in the beginning of the 1950s”.⁹⁵⁴

Still, some members like Fârșirotu maintain that in the aftermath of EU membership Romanians have become somewhat more willing to express pro-nationalist views, a testimony to that being the steep reduction in the membership figures of far left and social-democratic parties.⁹⁵⁵

As for the role of the media, they are generally viewed as objective in their assessments of the policy impact of the EU, but only because EU membership has never been questioned too much by the members of the Romanian general public, so the media have not tended to

⁹⁵⁰ Author’s interview with Vladimir Fârșirotu.

⁹⁵¹ Author’s interview with Romeo Crașmariu.

⁹⁵² Author’s interviews with various PRM members.

⁹⁵³ Author’s interview with Livius Țîrnea.

⁹⁵⁴ Author’s interview with Ghiorghe Talau.

⁹⁵⁵ Author’s interview with Vladimir Fârșirotu.

find fault with the EU.⁹⁵⁶ In fact, it is emphasized that media outlets are finely attuned to the changing dynamics within the EU and the intrusions of key EU figures like Jose Manuel Barroso and Viviane Reding in Romanian political discourses. A notable example was the January 2012 referendum when they are deemed to have attempted to instruct 8.5 million Romanians regarding which way they should vote.⁹⁵⁷ Because of such interference, EU officials are castigated for lacking tactfulness, as they do not seem to realize that minor opposition to the EU does not mean that Romania is against the EU in principle. It is assumed that any continued willingness on the part of EU actors to insert themselves in the political processes will eventually create suspicion among members of the press, which could mean that future coverage of EU-related issues may not be as benevolent.⁹⁵⁸ It is highlighted that the EU commissioners' successful attempts to prevent Bănescu's impeachment are frequently regarded as a "watershed moment", as they are seen to have brought about the evaporation of any good will on the part of most Romanians towards the EU project.⁹⁵⁹

With regard to systemic constraints on nationalist parties, there is a high degree of awareness regarding the alleged tendency of mainstream Romanian parties to shun cooperation with the PRM. It is even implied that electoral rules have been tampered with in a non-democratic manner to the detriment of the party, as evidenced by last minute changes to electoral system regulations in 2008.⁹⁶⁰ EU measures directed against nationalist parties are thus regarded as superfluous, but the PRM has a particularly difficult time finding allies on the European level, as the chips are seen to be stacked against nationalist parties when it comes to creating political groupings. For instance, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is

⁹⁵⁶ Author's interview with Ghiorghe Talau.

⁹⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁵⁹ Author's interviews with Eugen Mihăescu, Vladimir Fârșirotu, Ioan Enășoae and others.

⁹⁶⁰ Author's interview with Vladimir Fârșirotu.

alleged to consist of socialists and liberals with no interest in including nationalists.⁹⁶¹ In short, the implication is that accommodating nationalists is never a priority from the standpoint of European-level actors and it is extremely laborious to pursue cooperation with like-minded patriots on the European level.⁹⁶²

Framing of nationalism-related issues, dissemination of information on the EU, party coalition dynamics (Netherlands)

The PVV members articulate less clear-cut opinions regarding the impacts of the media and the academic community regarding the ways in which EU issues are framed. Some see academics as pushing certain “overly liberal” agendas, while others emphasize that issues of that nature are usually dealt with in a balanced manner and there is no significant pro-EU bias among scholars within the Netherlands. The persistence of the European frame in Dutch discourses is also attributed to the EU’s regional policies and the extolling of the benefits arising out of them (when in fact The Hague is perfectly capable of providing the necessary support to other regions like Groningen). By receiving money from Brussels, the Dutch state is presumed to be having its hands tied in a rhetorical sense, as it is forced to be reluctantly grateful to the EU.⁹⁶³

PVV politicians are concerned that “propaganda” emanating from the EU level is too pervasive and incessantly paints false pictures. EU official publications are castigated for being preoccupied with the positives associated with the supranational community. Keeping nationally oriented parties out of the picture is also said to be a priority for any self-respecting

⁹⁶¹ Ibid.

⁹⁶² Author’s interviews with various PRM members.

⁹⁶³ Author’s interview with Patricia van der Kammen.

EU bureaucrat.⁹⁶⁴ In this regard, Van der Stoep relates how he was called a “Fascist” within the confines of the European Parliament after speaking out against continued immigration, stressing that the term is especially insulting in the Dutch context, much more so than in the German one, given the actual histories of the two countries.⁹⁶⁵

At the national level, anti-EU rhetoric appears on occasions to be utilized as a way to smear political opponents and question their commitment to the interests of the Dutch nation-state. For example, proponents of what are perceived to be lax policies with regard to the naturalization of Turks are characterized as “in cowardly fashion laying their heads in the Europhile lap” and “traitorously squandering Dutch culture to Turkey and Europe”.⁹⁶⁶ Islam-critical allies of Wilders like Somali-Dutch activist Ayaan Hirsi Ali depict the EU as a lynchpin for entities like the Organization of the Islamic Conference (through its adoption of resolutions against “hate speech”), the underlying aim of which is to stifle debate on Islam within the Netherlands.⁹⁶⁷ In that sense the EU could be regarded as directly promoting political correctness within the Netherlands, especially when it comes to sensitive religious discussions.

From the standpoint of the party, the PVV members who are in the European Parliament are assumed to be very well-attuned to the realities on the ground and are quite attentive to the issues that are on the radar of regional and national level representatives. There is the firm conviction on the part of PVV representatives that their upper level

⁹⁶⁴ Author’s interview with Ad van Berkel.

⁹⁶⁵ Author’s interview with Daniël van der Stoep.

⁹⁶⁶ *PVV: Eurofiele Norder geeft zich over aan Turkse nukken* (Europhile Northerners surrender to Turkish whims), Press release, 18 August 2011.

⁹⁶⁷ *Wall Street Journal*. In Holland, Free Speech on Trial, 11 October 2010.

colleagues have shunned socialization into EU cultural habits, even as they encounter EU officials and frequently deal with EU-related issues.⁹⁶⁸

In relation to the PVV's relationship with other Dutch parties and the influence of the EU, the Haider saga was referred to by a number of the interviewees and criticized as an undemocratic bypassing of national regulations, as the PVV guarantee that they would extend support to any socialist party that found itself in such a position, as a matter of principle.⁹⁶⁹

However, the "domestic solidarity" frame, at least on the party level, is characterized as having remained untouched by messages emanating from the EU level. There is thus a high degree of trust in the other parties' sense of "fair play" and commitment to the Dutch democratic principles, which is far from the case in the other three countries under scrutiny. Dutch parties are seen as likely to "close ranks" in the name of democratic and authentically Dutch values,⁹⁷⁰ though Koertenoeven is not that convinced that this will hold true for the future.⁹⁷¹ In addition, the PVV depicts itself as a clean party that refrains from "saying too many strange things", which makes the job easier for its counterparts from other Dutch parties. Still, Janssen emphasizes that foreign parliamentarians constantly display surprise that other Dutch parties cooperate with the PVV without unease or hesitation.⁹⁷² While it is assumed that it is not totally out of the question that this mentality may change in the upcoming years, from his standpoint there is currently no indication that other Dutch parties would allow themselves to be influenced by the EU and refrain from cooperating with the PVV.⁹⁷³

⁹⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁶⁹ Author's interview with Matthijs Janssen.

⁹⁷⁰ Author's interviews with various PVV members.

⁹⁷¹ Author's interview with Wim Kortenoeven.

⁹⁷² Author's interviews with various PVV members.

⁹⁷³ Author's interview with Matthijs Janssen.

The EU constraints on the PVV's scope for manoeuvre are thus mainly on the level of the European Parliament, but they do not trickle down to the party environment within the Netherlands, because of the commitment to certain unwritten rules subscribed to by all parties and the PVV's experience in utilizing the right rhetorical devices.

The PVV's belief that Dutch cultural mores will continue to work to their advantage is largely consistent with some of the sentiments expressed in relation to Pan-Europeanism – in contrast to their German, Bulgarian and Romanian counterparts, PVV representatives do not express concerns that Dutch nationalism is in a state of crisis.

Framing of nationalism-related issues, dissemination of information on the EU, party coalition dynamics (Germany)

As for the EU-related constraints on nationalist expression within Germany, they are generally viewed as secondary to national ones, but still somewhat significant. The problem is partly that there are already some question marks regarding the degree of German citizens' attachment (and expression of it) to their country. In relation to the EU, it is lamented that Germany's membership of the union helps the other countries to be constantly aware that Germany is emasculated in terms of its nationalism. The rest of the EU states are thought to be very smug about Germany's indecisiveness when dealing with EU agents, so they no longer hold any respect for German nationalism.⁹⁷⁴

In that regard, the media climate in Germany is seen not to have helped matters. In Gärtner's view, the media across all countries tend to be little more than mouthpieces for the elites and given the latter's pronounced pro-EU orientation, this inevitably means that they

universally praise the EU and any negative impacts of the EU are consequently swept under the carpet.⁹⁷⁵ In particular, he firmly believes that Germany is in the clutches of a media dictatorship⁹⁷⁶ and the reporting of EU-related processes is accordingly more one-sided than in most other European countries.⁹⁷⁷ In particular, the main problem is that serious issues concerning the economy do not hit the front pages; thus, there is a tendency to gloss over the fact that Germany is the “biggest financial donor” within the Union, which is assumed to result in misperceptions among ordinary citizens regarding the economic realities in the country.⁹⁷⁸ Another viewpoint (held by Kohlmann) is that it would be difficult to assess the general EU conditioning effect on the German media, but the EU’s influence is suspected to be relatively important when it comes to one particular area - the “selection of personnel”. Thus, he implies that the media proprietors or moguls in Germany tend to toe the pro-EU line and this is presumably reflected in the nature of the appointments that they make; journalists who are enthusiastic regarding the EU may have an easier career path.⁹⁷⁹ However, overall, political correctness tends not to be attributed to the EU influences on the German political elites or the EU impacts on the media culture in Germany.⁹⁸⁰

On the issue of inter-party dynamics in Germany, it is clear that especially since the early 2000s *die Republikaner* have taken great care to distance themselves from political factions or movements that occupy the extreme or radical right of the German political spectrum. The party aspires to establish itself as a respectable and influential political entity on the communal, regional, and national levels and unlike the NPD does not appear to target

⁹⁷⁴ Author’s interview with Johann Gärtner.

⁹⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁷⁸ Author’s interviews with Alfred Dagenbach and Andreas Burkhardt.

⁹⁷⁹ Author’s interview with Karl-Martin Kohlmann.

⁹⁸⁰ Author’s interviews with Karl-Martin Kohlmann and various other REP members.

narrow constituencies.⁹⁸¹ The REP have characterized parties like the NPD and the DVU as “ideologically incompatible” and have accused the former of trying to subvert the political processes within Germany because of their rejection of democracy, the desire to engender revolutionary transformations of the political system, their opposition to capitalism, and the virulence of the expressed anti-Semitic or anti-American sentiments.⁹⁸² In addition, *die Republikaner* tend to ostracize factions like the Greens that are perceived to be too militant and thus enemies of democracy.⁹⁸³

While EU proddings are not needed in order to encourage other parties to isolate REP within the German political system, Gärtner maintains that EU-level officials do not even attempt to hide their unadulterated hostility towards nationalists during discussions organized by EU institutions. He details how on the three occasions visiting Strasbourg every effort was made to alienate and ostracize nationally minded actors, especially within the confines of the European Parliament.⁹⁸⁴ It is implied that patriotic parties at the EU level are bullied and intimidated and the commitment to free speech is only a rhetorical one, as only a select few are allowed to voice their opinions – and only if they are sufficiently skilled when it comes to Eurospeak.⁹⁸⁵

On the domestic level, as stated above, the EU impacts on coalition-making are superfluous, but only because domestic parties are perceived to have an aversion to nationalists:

⁹⁸¹ *Keine braune Volksfront!* (We are not a brownshirt people’s movement!), Press release, October 2004.

⁹⁸² Ibid.

⁹⁸³ *Unseren Staat und die freiheitlich-demokratische Gründordnung verteidigen – keine Absprachen oder Zusammenarbeit mit linken, rechten oder liberalen Extremisten* (We are to defend our state and its free and democratic character – no discussions or cooperation with left-wing, right-wing or liberal extremists), Party resolution (10 December 2006).

⁹⁸⁴ Author’s interview with Johann Gärtner.

⁹⁸⁵ Ibid.

“The EU is not needed in terms of encouraging other parties to isolate us....the SPD treats anything that comes from the right side of the political spectrum as highly suspect”.⁹⁸⁶

Chapter Conclusion

Chapter Four analyzed the sentiments of nationalist-populist party members in the four countries with a specific focus on their understandings of the various facets of Pan-Europeanism. Pre-existing pan-national identifications remain quite entrenched in the case of the CEE populists and could be regarded as in-built triggers for Euroscepticism due to the EU being evaluated as naturally going against what is maintained to be the “dream positioning” of their countries within the European family of nations. In the Bulgarian case, the assessments surrounding the EU impacts on national identity are both positive and negative due to the tendency to intuitively view the EU as a representative of common “European peoplehood” that is still in principle exclusionary of countries like Turkey, but is also unfair in its treatment of “ancient protectors” (any Russian-related issues). It is clear that in this regard Pan-Europeanism is criticized for possessing tacit anti-Russian inclinations that are supposedly eagerly embraced by Bulgarian elites. Similarly, in the Romanian context, Pan-Europeanism is framed as an exercise in exclusion and is associated with “double standards” in relation to Easterners versus Westerners and Latin vs. Germanic Europeans, with Romania having a clear sense of belonging to the Latin part of Europe that puts it odds with certain “unwritten rules” structuring the nature of its interactions with other EU members. While from the standpoint of the German party members their country’s identity does not render itself to an accurate positioning within a specific cluster of European nations, the exposure of

⁹⁸⁶ Author’s interview with Rolf Schlierer.

an allegedly emasculated German identity (that invites ridicule) to other Europeans due to the country's EU membership, the supposed bias against German nationalism within the EU as well as Germany's "donor" status (in an economic sense) predisposes them to view Pan-Europeanism in a negative fashion. Ironically, the almost complete lack of transcendent nationalisms (with the possible exception of the interest expressed in solidifying the bonds between the Netherlands and the United States) similarly predisposes the PVV party to display principled opposition to the EU project and frown upon any Pan-European "grand designs" that attempt to encourage the European nations to act in concert in non-economic realms.

The current and potential issues with regard to the incorporation of "outsiders" within the European frame also possess a lot of explanatory power in terms of helping identify the rationale behind the parties' negative attitudes towards the EU project. The PVV is somewhat unique among nationalist-populist parties, as it does not see the potential Turkish membership and the CEE enlargements as being fundamentally different from each other. Despite not generally regarding European identity as a concept that has much academic or practical utility, they are still keen on putting forth their own interpretations pertaining to what the acceptable boundary definitions of Europe should entail. Similarly, even nationalist parties like Ataka and the PRM that are very much alike in their overall policy agendas manifest significant differences regarding their views on expanding the boundaries of "Europeanness", as testified by their dissimilar stances pertaining to Turkish accession – the PRM is conditionally supportive of Turkish accession (providing it settles its geopolitical disputes with countries like Cyprus), while Ataka is resolutely opposed to it. This chapter also offered a number of insights regarding the perceived connections between a strengthened Pan-European identity, national identity and "vulnerability to Muslim influences" (from the

standpoint of nationalist-populist parties). In the case of the PVV, the potential weakening of national identity (at the expense of the European one) at some point in the future is seen as likely to discourage Dutch citizens from opposing Islamization, while Ataka, REP and PRM members do not express a belief that their citizens' elevated sense of Pan-European identity will make them susceptible to being "taken over by Islam".

As for the equating of Pan-Europeanism with geopolitical power blocs, this persists as a particularly sensitive appendage of Euroscepticism from the standpoint of the PVV party and is one area in which the EU tends to be given a sympathetic reading by CEE populists, for whom suspiciousness of American foreign policy aims trumps any reservations regarding the EU's heavy-handedness in exerting its influence on their countries.

Lastly, this chapter also dealt with more specific EU-level constraints on the nature of nationalist expression in the four countries that are the subject of analysis, detailing the populists' perceptions regarding the nature of media reporting on EU issues, the EU's involvement in redefining coalition parameters within their nation-states and the EU influence on the social desirability of expressing pro-nationalist sentiments. Generally the EU-imposed restrictions on nationalism and the changes to the domestic party environment are viewed in a negative light across the four different party contexts, but are mostly conceptualized as annoyances rather than threats to core nationalist domains. In particular, it is clear that nationalists in CEE countries do not blame the EU for having imposed novel understandings of what constitutes "appropriate nationalist discourses" and any grievances identified in relation to the domestic political culture are seen to be largely unaffected by EU influences.

Returning to the main question that provided the blueprint or the discussion – whether a EU-fostered “European community” could displace the nation-state as the principal object of attachment - the consensus among all parties is that Pan-Europeanism (manifested in any EU-level cultural or legal initiatives) does not currently in itself pose a credible threat to conventional nationalism (premised on devotion to a single nation-state) by being likely to cause a transfer of citizen loyalties from the national to the supranational level. However, given the premium placed on meso-level identities by CEE populists as well as the REP’s and especially the PVV’s concerns that the EU centre of power is (undeservedly) shifting to the East (with more enlargements in sight), issues connected to the lacking intra-European solidarities are unlikely to go away any time soon.

Chapter Five: Discussions of Migration and Citizenship within the framework of the EU

Chapter Introduction

Having explored the coverage of the nationalist-populist parties' disposition towards Pan-Europeanism in Chapter Four, in this chapter I examine some of the general and issue-specific grievances of Ataka, the PRM, the REP and the PVV in relation to the ways in which the EU is assumed to exert its influence on the realms of migration and citizenship. This chapter will firstly focus on the nature of the arguments in relation to the EU impacts on immigration and emigration dynamics (where relevant in the case of the latter) and will then proceed to offer a brief analysis of the nationalist-populist parties' perceptions regarding the national citizenship rules in an era in which they are subject to EU influence. The notion of "multiculturalism" and the perceived role of the EU in its promotion is regarded as conceptually separate from that of "immigration", as discussed in various sections of Chapter 2. Thus, any EU-related concerns pertaining to multiculturalism will be analyzed in Chapter 6, together with the minority empowerment theme.

Immigration matters and perceived EU influences promoting immigration

My interviews included a specific question on immigration: "How are you disposed toward EU level initiatives (i.e. those with an emphasis on burden-sharing) that touch upon migration?" This question sparked discussion about a range of migration-related issues. From party documents and national media it is also clear that there are a number of dimensions to

the issue of immigration. Not all these dimensions could have been anticipated from my literature review.

Section 3 of Chapter 2 identified migration as an area of particular salience for nationalist-populists, suggesting that migration stood at the cross-section of Europeanisation and nationalism. As mentioned in Chapter 2, membership of the EU leads to the redefining of “insiders” and “outsiders”, and the mobility of EU citizens within the EU contributes to an overall trend towards increased immigration which inevitably poses challenges for those who view the “nation” in ethnic terms, as a closed community.

More specifically, there exist a number of areas that are likely to be deemed especially problematic by nationalist-populist party members. The first of these is the purported lack of effectiveness of the EU. As a supranational agency, it is in theory supposed to aid the nation-state in controlling migration, but EU membership can be viewed as weakening the state’s control in this field. This is chiefly because EU membership leads to unchecked immigration of EU citizens, but also because the EU is perceived as ineffective in preventing the influx of migrants from other continents. Another area which Ch. 2 identified as problematic was the North vs. South (and the newly emerging East vs. West) divide when dealing with migration originating from countries external to the EU. In other words, North-West European countries at the “core” of the EU may have different preoccupations from those of other member states. Terrorism seems more threatening in the West than in the East, while Northern member-states are less worried than their southern neighbours about the influx of economic migrants from Africa and are tempted to “free-ride”, evading obligations to pay for patrolling the EU’s southern borders. If the EU spends more money on concerns of primary relevance to its most powerful members, this can cause resentment towards the EU in other member-states. A third

area of concern identified in Ch. 2 was the supposed negative impact of migration from East to West within the EU.

The discussion in previous chapters of this thesis leads one to anticipate that the different nationalist-populist parties would have somewhat different approaches to migration. One basic difference is that, as suggested in Chapter 2, Bulgaria and Romania are primarily sending countries for migrants, while the Netherlands and Germany are primarily receiving countries. Hence one would suppose references to immigration to be more common among members of the PVV and REP. Chapter 3 identified a range of different immigration issues in the Netherlands and Germany. By contrast, my initial surveys of the case study countries did not suggest that immigration was politically salient in Bulgaria or Romania. Chapter 4 further identified some important differences even between Germany and the Netherlands, suggesting that German populists have a sense of pan-European and central European identity which can make them less antagonistic than their Dutch equivalents towards migrants from CEE.

Chapter 5 continues this theme by outlining some additional divergences regarding the ways in which CEE-related migration worries manifest themselves among PVV and REP functionaries, as to a degree in the nature of the discourses adopted by Ataka and the PRM. In the latter case, perceived double standards in relation to their countries' treatment by the Westerners also inspired opposition to EU-led migration initiatives. Sections 2.1-3 look in turn at the three predicted areas of grievance arising out of the countries' membership in the EU and the arguments adopted in relation to them. It provides close analysis of the complaints expressed by party functionaries and politicians with regard to EU membership reducing the nation-state's ability to control migration; unfair distribution of resources within

the EU with regard to immigration control; and supposed negative economic impacts of the mobility of EU citizens. However, Sections 2.1-3 will also suggest the existence of worries not identified in my original review of the literature. Most notably, although the literature on nationalist-populist parties, being focused mostly on Western Europe, tends to highlight concerns about immigration, Ataka and the PRM not surprisingly emphasize the role of the EU in promoting emigration. However, the particular focus of their complaints – often relating to land tenure – would have been hard to predict. More generally, as demonstrated in both Sections 2.2 and 2.3, the worries expressed by nationalist-populists often seem to be decidedly irrational and seemingly far-fetched, and therefore hard to anticipate.

It is important to remember that there is not necessarily a direct link between the scale and impact of immigration and the extent to which populists adopt immigration as a political issue. As suggested by Chapter Two, much also depends on institutional structures of individual countries, which help determine how far populist causes can make political headway. Moreover, since politicians also behave opportunistically, immigration may be adopted as a cause for entirely cynical reasons.

Concerns that the EU diminishes the state's ability to control immigration

In the case of the Ataka party representatives, the EU influence on the realm of immigration tends to be viewed in a universally negative light, even though immigration issues are not generally (the current fears tied to the fall-out from the Syrian refugee crisis notwithstanding) at the forefront of party concerns. In essence, the EU is blamed because its

supposedly ineffective attempts to control immigration flows are not viewed as likely to insulate Bulgaria from worldwide migration trends.

Any reservations with regard to the EU level regulation of migration tend to be magnified due to the party members' contention that the current situation in Bulgaria pertaining to the issue of porous borders and illegal migrants is close to optimal. As Bulgaria is not thought to be plagued by any current issues in relation to immigration, once the country enters the Schengen area, immigration matters are assumed likely to become more problematic.⁹⁸⁷ Thus, as a result of the country becoming a member of the Schengen area, Ataka members deem it plausible that Bulgaria could become an attractive destination for immigrants from Africa and Asia, while at the same time retaining a relatively low level of economic affluence.

Opposition to EU governance in the realm of immigration is also justified based on arguments from history. In a general sense, serious doubts are expressed regarding the EU's ability to keep Third World irregular migrants out of European states, given that the Soviet Union (which was not overly conscious when it came to the observance of human rights and was able to seal borders), is presumed not to have been too successful in achieving that task. Thus, resisting globalization phenomena through membership of a supranational community is conceptualized as futile, because most illegal immigrants are regarded as perfectly capable of evading almost any controls that are thrown at them.⁹⁸⁸

⁹⁸⁷ Author's interview with Nikolay Pehlivanov.

⁹⁸⁸ Author's interviews with Shavel S.

From a normative standpoint, lack of trust is also displayed with regard to the professionalism of the EU police force⁹⁸⁹ and EU overregulation in the migration domain, which – perhaps paradoxically – is also a cause for complaint, and tends to be connected to the creation of a dependence or colonial relationship between Bulgaria and Western European countries.⁹⁹⁰

As for the PRM, immigration in Romania is not viewed as likely to be significantly shaped by EU policies, both in the present and in the conceivable future.

PRM members seem to assume that the dynamics of population movements have a degree of determinism to them, so it is viewed as fallacious to read too much into current trends, without paying attention to the historical underpinnings. In this regard, the nature of the migration of population groups is seen as likely to continue to be from East to West (just like in ancient times) and it is thought to be unrealistic to assume that Romania could become sufficiently affluent any time soon in order for it to become a primary migration destination.⁹⁹¹ In that sense, Romania's EU membership is not deemed a significant contributory factor when it comes to making the country more vulnerable to migration flows from the East, but it is also gauged not to have improved matters when it comes to border security and similar suspicions to those voiced by their Bulgarian counterparts are voiced in relation to the legitimacy of EU migration agencies.⁹⁹²

Among Western European countries like the Netherlands and Germany, immigration remains an issue that evokes significant concerns. Anti-EU opinions attributable to the EU's

⁹⁸⁹ Author's interviews with various Ataka members.

⁹⁹⁰ Author's interview with Galen Monev.

⁹⁹¹ Author's interview with Romeo Craşmariu.

⁹⁹² Author's interviews with various PRM members.

supposedly detrimental influence on migration affairs are commonplace. The two case-studies differ in the extent to which the EU is blamed directly, as opposed to the national government. One somewhat surprising finding is the tendency of the PVV to ascribe a much higher degree of determinism to the EU level and EU officials in the realm of immigration than its German counterpart. This is odd, given that the literature in Section 3 of Chapter 2 established that Germany and the Netherlands have generally been analyzed as part of the same camp in terms of their ability to be pace-setters with regard to EU migration policy. In addition, the divergent Dutch and German historical trajectories pertaining to immigration, with the former being on the more liberal side in terms of policies and underlying mentalities (see Chapter 3) means that one might have supposed German populists to be more likely to blame an external entity like the EU for having entrenched “post-national and universalist frames” in this realm. However, the rhetoric employed by the PVV is suggestive of a tendency to accord primacy to the EU when looking for a culprit in this domain, which is lacking among the REP members.

From the standpoint of the PVV, the nation-state is depicted as having been almost entirely displaced by the EU in terms of its projected ability to set the policy agenda. Janssen, for example, affirms that the EU is crucial when it comes to transforming immigration dynamics, characterizing the evolution of the EU’s capacity to affect decisions pertaining to immigration and multiculturalism as follows:

“Nowadays the EU is more at fault for immigration (and multiculturalism); in the 1960s and 1970s our governments deserved most of the blame. Today the European Union has a big influence – we cannot decide for ourselves how many immigrants we want or not.”⁹⁹³

⁹⁹³ Author’s interview with Matthijs Janssen.

For the PVV, the most detrimental development associated with the EU's freedom of movement provisions is thought to be the removal of visas, because they are thought to have provided governments with a rough idea regarding the number of people interested in entering their country. Thus, visas are characterized as serving as a useful preparatory tool that allows governments to be more informed regarding the process of policy-making when it comes to migration. In this regard, in addition to a loss of control over immigrants, the EU is assumed to have created an uncertainty among policy-makers due to ushering in new informational asymmetries.⁹⁹⁴ Furthermore, any tightening of the regulations in order to reduce migration flows always runs the risk of being overruled by the EU, which is another factor that – according to at least one PVV member - causes Dutch policy-makers to feel a degree of helplessness when dealing with such issues.⁹⁹⁵

In particular, the loss of control rhetoric is tied to the false promises of burden-sharing initiatives like Frontex. PVV members universally regard it as ineffective, as established democracies like the Netherlands are assumed to be left at the mercy of newcomers like Romania with dubious democratic credentials.⁹⁹⁶ Thus, the underlying assumption is that Eastern European countries (at least at this stage) do not deserve to be trusted with regard to border controls and monitoring:

“You can pay them off [Romanian border authorities] in order to be let in [from Ukraine], but the EU closes its eyes about this reality and praises the Eastern European countries”.⁹⁹⁷

⁹⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁹⁵ Author's interview with European Parliament candidate from the PVV.

⁹⁹⁶ Author's interview with various PVV members.

⁹⁹⁷ Author's interview with Daniël van der Stoep.

Thus, Frontex tends to be dubbed as a facilitator of immigration instead of a fence-maker.⁹⁹⁸ In addition, southern European countries like Italy are gauged to have very permissive and ineffective migration regulations, which are thus counterproductive to curbing migration flows.⁹⁹⁹

The problem of entrusting newly acceded or southern European member states with such responsibilities aside, having one's own fully operational customs authorities is also regarded as a matter of national pride and is seen as an essential element of national distinctiveness. For this reason, even if EU level border checks were to add a welcome extra layer when it comes to border controls, they are regarded as insufficient unless Dutch migration authorities remain actively involved and are privy to all the proceedings.¹⁰⁰⁰

Unexpectedly (given that it did not emerge from the literature reviewed in Chapter 2), a supposed shift in the incidence of crime from Eastern to Western Europe is an issue which particularly seems to concern PVV members and which leads them to blame Europeanisation and decry the abolition of border controls within the EU. The PVV displays a marked tendency to subject Eastern European immigrants to “crime framing”. For instance, Kortenoeven maintains that Eastern European states like Romania are “becoming safer every day”, while the Netherlands is “now more dangerous compared to before”, because CEE countries are successful in exporting their criminality due to the EU framework.¹⁰⁰¹ Thus, immigration is one area that puts the most sharply into perspective the different kind of “benefits” accruing to Easterners and Westerners as a result of their common membership in the supranational community. As summed up by Van Berkel, “the lessons from the

⁹⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹⁹ Author's interview with various PVV members.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Author's interview with Matthijs Janssen.

¹⁰⁰¹ Author's interviews with Wim Kortenoeven, Barry Madlener and others.

enlargement to the South in the 1980s never managed to sink in when it came to the EU officials”.¹⁰⁰²

Van der Stoep sums up the role of the EU when it comes to this issue area as follows:

“The degree to which we will be successful in dealing with immigration in the future will depend on the influence of the EU; if the EU gains further influence on national legislation, it will be hard for the state to reverse some of the negative trends”.¹⁰⁰³

It is difficult to speak of a general PVV opposition to the “free movement of people” principle, as this fundamental tenet of the EU is lauded in certain contexts, like in the pronouncements of the party leader¹⁰⁰⁴ and some of the interviewees when speaking about educational opportunities.¹⁰⁰⁵

However, as already mentioned, PVV members single out EU migration policy influences when it comes to the increase in immigration within the Netherlands, at least since the 1990s. For instance, Madlener gives credit to Mark Rutte’s government for its efforts to tackle immigration issues, but sees the EU as unabashedly promoting immigration and hindering the efforts of the national level authorities.¹⁰⁰⁶ In relation to immigration potentialities, PVV press releases take affront at what is deemed to be the EU’s leniency with regard to family reunification, resulting in “overcrowding and negative effects on the economic situation within countries”. The EU is presumed to have a knack for encouraging a

¹⁰⁰² Author’s interview with Ad van Berkel.

¹⁰⁰³ Author’s interview with Daniël van der Stoep.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Wilders, Gert. Copy of the speech that would have been delivered by Wilders in the UK pertaining to the screening of “Fitna” in the House of Lords, 13 February 2009.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Author’s interviews with Ad van Berkel and Wim Kortenoeven.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Author’s interview with Barry Madlener.

“victim mentality” among migrants and is thought to most certainly conceptualize the interests of the nation-state as being secondary to those of the immigrants.¹⁰⁰⁷ Specifically Wilders takes issue with the ECJ annulling Dutch legislation restricting family reunification for immigrants on welfare (March 2010) as well as a Dutch court decision (from August 2011) declaring Dutch legislation obliging Turkish immigrants to the Netherlands to take classes on integration as invalid (with the Dutch court explaining its reasoning by drawing on EU rules).¹⁰⁰⁸

In the German context, while opposition to immigration does not feature prominently among the 16 points of the party and is not frequently referred to in official publications, *die Republikaner* clearly take serious issue with the Schengen Agreement and the loss of border controls that it entails.¹⁰⁰⁹ Increased criminality (specifically the creation of Eastern European mafia-like structures in relation to drug smuggling) is cited as a major concern.¹⁰¹⁰ In general, the current immigration policies of Germany (in part shaped by the EU) are deemed overly permissive and lacking any selectivity. The loss of a notion of control implies that the process of immigration policy in Germany proceeds in a reverse fashion to that in countries like Australia and USA. The reason is that Germany is afforded the opportunity to assess the degree to which immigrants are qualified and the exact gaps in the working force they need to fill only once they have arrived in the country. By contrast, one REP activist pointed out that, in the United States, prior screening and weeding out of immigrants is the norm, preempting unnecessary immigration, which is conceptualized as much more difficult under the EU

¹⁰⁰⁷ *Europese Commissie geeft toelichting op ramzalig groenboek gezinshereniging* (European Commission Green Paper notes regarding family reunification), 12 January 2012.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Wilders, Geert. *Marked for Death – Islam’s war against the West and me* (2012), p. 181.

¹⁰⁰⁹ *Sicherheit und Souveränität des Nationalstaates erhalten!* (Preserve the security and the sovereignty of the nation-state!), Press release, 26 November 2007.

¹⁰¹⁰ *Ibid.*

system.¹⁰¹¹ One unfortunate repercussion – from a REP perspective - is that 65 % of the Turks who reside in Berlin deemed to lack any formal academic qualifications and unable to contribute to society in tangible ways.¹⁰¹² A specific concern is also tied to the visa-free travel opportunities within the EU afforded to Turkish service providers and entrepreneurs as a result of ECJ judgments.¹⁰¹³

While the underlying dynamics are deemed to be to a large extent shaped by the EU, in contrast to the PVV members, REP representatives do however regard the national government as more actively complicit than the EU level when it comes to the pestilence of unbridled immigration. Germany is characterized as country that is in principle very open to immigration, as part of its official policy, with the ingrained German mentality being summed up as “German money for the entire world” due to its overemphasis on the pursuit of altruism in international affairs, traceable to the decades prior to the 1990s. Thus, EU measures since the 1990s are thought to have provided an institutional structure and a higher degree of organization to migration, but not fundamentally altered German elites’ priorities in terms of letting in outsiders into the country.¹⁰¹⁴ The party leader is thus very clear that the nation-state apparatus is rotten from the inside with regard to the management of immigration, so it would only be fair to conceptualize the EU as a secondary culprit.¹⁰¹⁵ In addition, and despite German stereotypes about thieving Poles, the anti-CEE paradigm in relation to the freedom of movement opportunities engendered by these countries’

¹⁰¹¹ Author’s interview with Rolf Schlierer.

¹⁰¹² Author’s interview with Alexander von Drage.

¹⁰¹³ *Kommt die Visumfreiheit für Türken?* (Visas no longer needed in the case of Turks?), REP party newspaper, 2009.

¹⁰¹⁴ Author’s interview with Alfred Dagenbach.

¹⁰¹⁵ Author’s interview with Rolf Schlierer.

membership in the community stops short of attaching a general criminal frame to the migrant groups from these newly acceded countries, in sharp contrast to the PVV.¹⁰¹⁶

Burden-sharing and resentments at perceived free-riding by certain EU member-states with regard to immigration control

The arguments espoused by REP members also suggest that the lack of intra-European solidarities (mentioned in relation to the euro) inevitably manifests itself in the realm of immigration – for instance, countries like Italy are blamed for not exercising diligence with regard to border checks and it is claimed that “without giving it a second thought simply redirect migration flows to Germany”.¹⁰¹⁷ In this regard, Germany’s EU partners are urged to open up to all the asylum seekers who ended up in Germany in the early 1990s in order to demonstrate their good will and ease the burden on the Germans.¹⁰¹⁸ Fears are also expressed in relation to new resettlement programmes proposed at the EU level, with Germany assumed to be one of the countries that is likely to become the primary recipient of refugees from crisis zones in Africa and Asia.¹⁰¹⁹ All in all, Germany is deemed to have been disproportionately affected by the migration flows within the EU in comparison to most other countries due to its level of economic development, with the implication being that there has been some semblance of a deliberate closing of ranks among other states, the implicit agreement being that the German state should be forced to deal on its own with any migration fall-outs.

¹⁰¹⁶ Author’s interviews with various REP members.

¹⁰¹⁷ *Politischer Aschermittwoch im Zeichen des Widerstands gegen Islamisierung* (Political Ash Wednesday as a sign of the fight against Islamization), Press release, 9 March 2011.

¹⁰¹⁸ *EU Einwanderungspunkt ist überflüssig und schadet deutschen Interessen* (The EU policies on asylum and migration are superfluous and harm German interests), Press release, 17 October 2008.

In terms of future potentialities, Frontex is evaluated as likely to remain ineffective, as the competing interests of different EU member states are unlikely to ever be reconciled with each other.¹⁰²⁰ Thus, it will continue to constitute a “placebo” and represent agency that only serves to gobble up money and has limited effectiveness.¹⁰²¹

While the discussion so far has centred on issues that could be conceptualized as a natural outgrowth of the EU policies covering migration, the issue of burden-sharing (as far as one can tell from my interview data) also brings to light some specific grievances and divergences between the countries that are somewhat surprising and do not necessarily reflect the real (and intended) effects of EU regulations in this domain. In some cases they are linked instead to alarmist prognoses about future migration trends.

In the Bulgarian case, among some Ataka politicians, extremely pessimistic appraisals of the changing economic realities in Bulgaria as a result of EU influences shape their thoughts on immigration control. The negativity displayed towards the EU impacts on immigration policies is attributable to the perceived unwillingness on the part of the supranational community to “foot certain bills”. In contrast to the PRM case where the arguments put forth appear to be consistent with the literature and are quite migration-specific, generic EU-related (mostly economic) fears are at the cornerstone of some of the anti-EU potshots that are taken in this domain.

Firstly, as an outgrowth of the previously expressed beliefs that the EU has adversely affected Bulgaria in terms of its economic development, EU officials are lambasted for not

¹⁰¹⁹ *EU plant Masseneinwanderungsprogramm* (EU plans a new programme of mass immigration), REP Party newspaper, 2009.

¹⁰²⁰ *Der nächste Sturm auf Europa* (The next siege of Europe), Party newspaper REP, 2011.

¹⁰²¹ Author’s interview with various REP members.

being conscious of the need for Bulgaria to receive proper financial support in order to tackle illegal immigration. Bulgaria is envisioned as a country that currently is or is in the process of being transformed into a buffer zone of the EU.¹⁰²² For instance, given that the state is strategically located at the periphery of the EU, the expectation is that immigration flows between non-member Turkey and Greece would also affect Bulgaria in the future. The potential conflict that could occur between Syria and Iran is also associated with an increase in migration flows.¹⁰²³ In this regard, the major criticism leveled at the EU is tied to the lack of sufficient funding provided to the Bulgarian authorities to deal with these eventualities and the prioritization of rhetorical posturing or the issuing of orders on the part of EU officials.¹⁰²⁴

In particular, with regard to Bulgaria's nature as a buffer state, scepticism is expressed pertaining to the legal obligation bestowed upon the country to join the Schengen Area at some future point, as in addition to the negative psychological effects of the waves of migration from conflict zones, the allocation of funds for the building of accommodation camps would be expected in order for living arrangements to be provided for these immigrants. Accordingly, the major concern is that Bulgaria would have its hands tied, because presumably most immigrants would be able to argue that their human and political rights have been violated in their countries of origin, so they will not simply end up to be temporary residents in the country.¹⁰²⁵

Ataka politicians' views on immigration do not appear to necessarily diverge significantly from those of the mainstream in Bulgaria. In the 1990s, when amendments in

¹⁰²² Author's interview with Mario Punchev.

¹⁰²³ Author's interview with Ventsislav Lakov.

¹⁰²⁴ Author's interviews with various Ataka members.

¹⁰²⁵ Author's interview with Nikolay Alexandrov.

legislation were made in Bulgaria (often under tacit EU pressure) to transform the country into a more accommodating destination for refugees and asylum seekers, these two groups were frequently depicted in popular discourses in a rather negative fashion and a stigma of criminality was attached to them.¹⁰²⁶ Even liberally inclined experts whose primary role was to offer guidelines regarding the precise ways in which international standards pertaining to the protection of refugees could be applied to Bulgaria remained very conscious of the distinction between ethnically Bulgarian refugees and “those originating from virtually anywhere around the world”.¹⁰²⁷ Such attitudes appeared to coexist with the pride not infrequently invoked that offering protection to and accommodating vulnerable nationalities is deeply rooted in the Bulgarian mentality, as in the cases of Bulgarian Jews fleeing the Spanish Inquisition and Armenians settling in Bulgaria during the early 20th century to escape Young Turks’ persecution.¹⁰²⁸

Unlike in the case of the Ataka party, PRM members appear to be more ambiguously disposed towards the EU impacts on their nation-state in the realm of immigration and do not raise any substantial issues with regard to any perceived unwillingness of the EU to provide financial aid to vulnerable “frontier countries” like Romania. However, they emulate the Bulgarian-specific grievances by expressing a high degree of pessimism regarding the current and projected emigration trends, as discussed below.

It is worth speculating whether the lesser stigma attached to Orientalism in Romania and the more tolerant attitude towards Turkey (as discussed in Chapters Three and Four) could have also played a role in shaping the viewpoints of PRM party members with regard

¹⁰²⁶ Guentcheva, Rossitza. *Автоетнография на прехода: понятията бежанец и убежище в България след 1989 г.* (Autoethnography of the Transition – The Notions of Refugee and Asylum in Post-1989 Bulgaria) (2012), pp. 16-17.

¹⁰²⁷ Ibid, pp. 17-18.

to the perceived risks of Muslim immigration within the framework of the EU, as potential immigration issues arising out of geopolitical turmoil in the Middle East are generally discussed in a more sympathetic light by PRM party representatives than their Ataka colleagues.¹⁰²⁹

Economic impacts of East-West migration within the EU

The issues related to supposedly increased unemployment in certain industrial sectors affecting native Germans (i.e. due to “outsourcing”) are mentioned in REP party documents,¹⁰³⁰ but the PVV and REP interviewees generally do not dwell on this matter or consider it especially problematic.¹⁰³¹

Unexpectedly, both Bulgarian and Romanian interviewees expressed anxiety about the economic impact of East-West migration in their own countries. These concerns tended to relate to worries about land ownership, reflecting common nationalist emotions towards the native soil.

In addition to not providing a check on the geopolitical ambitions of powerful states, Bulgaria’s EU membership is also thought to have reduced the Bulgarians’ attachment to ancestral lands and territories. It is stipulated that one of the reasons for that has been the increased emphasis on gaining quick profits on the part of some Bulgarians coupled with a desire to emigrate, which has enabled minorities like Turks to begin purchasing agricultural lots in Bulgaria at a much higher rate in the aftermath of membership. The fears pertaining to

¹⁰²⁸ Ibid, p. 21.

¹⁰²⁹ Author’s interviews with Ghiorghe Talau, Vladimir Fârșirotu and others.

¹⁰³⁰ *Sicherheit und Souveränität des Nationalstaates erhalten!* (Preserve the security and the sovereignty of the nation-state!), Press release, 26 November 2007.

the continued existence of the Bulgarian nation-state (connected to the supposed resurgence of Pan-Ottomanism, previously discussed in the geopolitics section of Chapter Four) are also brought to the forefront, as the rationale of the Turks when it comes to acquiring lands is assumed not to be grounded in economics- or subsistence-related considerations. On the contrary, more ulterior motivations are attributed to them:

“What our ancestors won through violent conquest [claimed by the Turks] is simply being purchased today.”¹⁰³²

Party representatives invoke parallels between the settlement patterns during the early stages of the Israeli/Palestine conflict and the Turkish people’s interest in gaining ownership of certain lands, reiterating that the EU is impotent in its capacity to deter secessionists.¹⁰³³

Furthermore, the reduction in the importance attached to land ownership among Bulgarians is also regarded as an outgrowth of the EU’s corrosive influence on Bulgarian agriculture – in part due to the EU-imposed requirements for the fulfillment of export quotas, it is assumed that by the year 2020 Plovdiv and Pazardzhik (currently the principal agricultural centers in Bulgaria) will likely experience significant losses in agricultural productivity and the agricultural sector as a whole is predicted to wane in importance.¹⁰³⁴ Thus, the ill-thought out agricultural policies in Bulgaria attributable largely to the EU level are associated with a dimishment of the prestige attached to the Bulgarians’ engagement in agricultural activities and subsequently are thought to have brought about a shift in Bulgarians’ attitudes when it comes to the ownership of land, which is regarded as a push

¹⁰³¹ Author’s interviews with various REP and PVV members.

¹⁰³² Author’s interviews with Pehlivanov, Asenov and others.

¹⁰³³ Author’s interview with Adrian Asenov.

¹⁰³⁴ Ibid.

factor for emigration. As mentioned above, there is supposedly a reverse effect as well, with concerns expressed in relation to land ownership and the de-Bulgarization of Bulgarian areas attributable to trepidations associated with Bulgarian emigration, thought to have increased in the aftermath of membership, and sardonically characterized by one member as “the only benefit of EU membership”.¹⁰³⁵

In short, in contrast to the seeming nonchalance with which EU impacts on immigration are initially approached by Ataka members, various current and potential EU effects in the realm of immigration appear to be tied to major existential concerns from the standpoint of the Bulgarian state, with the EU influences in these realms almost universally regarded as undesirable.

Similarly to the Bulgarian case, one of the avowed concerns in relation to the detrimental EU impacts has been the perceived dip in the appreciation that Romanians show for their native lands, with the selling of the land equated with the selling of the soul.¹⁰³⁶ The main issue from the party’s standpoint is that lands are being offered to foreigners without people thinking of the long-term repercussions for the nation-state. For instance, in the aftermath of EU membership, Americans and Israelis are judged to have increasingly started to purchase agricultural lands in Romania.¹⁰³⁷ In this regard, the decrease in the value attached to land ownership among ethnic Romanians is in part tied to the enhanced prospects for emigration since the attainment of membership. When it comes to this particular development, Traian Băsescu and his government bear the brunt of the criticism, as they are assumed not to have their priorities straight in terms of implementing proper policies and this

¹⁰³⁵ Author’s interview with Galen Monev.

¹⁰³⁶ Author’s interview with Vladimir Fârșirotu.

¹⁰³⁷ Author’s interview with various PRM members.

has resulted in people being discouraged from finding their happiness in Romania.¹⁰³⁸

However, blame is apportioned on the EU as an essential secondary actor.¹⁰³⁹

While there is a degree of pride due to the Romanians émigrés' enrichment of foreign societies (there is the emphasis on Romanian becoming the second most commonly spoken language in Silicon Valley after English), EU membership is strongly associated with a "brain drain" and a lack of any significant boost to Romanian research or an increase in the salaries of academics, which has caused pessimism regarding the current development path of the country.¹⁰⁴⁰ Funar maintains that "the supranational community continues to rob us and steals the educated brains of those belonging to the younger generations".¹⁰⁴¹ From both an idealistic and practical standpoint, the concerns tied to emigration are significant due to the expressed belief that only the Romanians who have returned from abroad could truly contribute to the country's economic resurgence.¹⁰⁴² Academic studies published on the PRM website have corroborated the expressed views that the Romanians employed abroad have only made miniscule contributions to the country's GDP; thus the new freedom of movement opportunities provided by EU membership have only brought about false hopes among members of the populace.¹⁰⁴³ The perceived failure of major privatization deals and the rapid transition from Ceaușescu-style communism to untrammelled capitalism, in part triggered by the Romanian elites' desire to catch the EU accession train, are also regarded as contributing factors to the emigration waves. For instance, as a result of the reverberations of the European economic crisis, Romanian debt is seen to have doubled since 2008 (when it stood

¹⁰³⁸ Author's interview with Romeo Crașmariu.

¹⁰³⁹ Author's interviews with various PRM members.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Author's interview with Vladimir Fârșirotu.

¹⁰⁴¹ Author's interview with Gheorghe Funar.

¹⁰⁴² Ibid.

¹⁰⁴³ Ibid.

at 19.4 % of the country's GDP)¹⁰⁴⁴ and comparisons have even been made with Turkey, the latter being envisioned as being in a better shape than Romania due to its non-embeddedness into the supranational structures.

Citizenship transformations

Section 2 of Chapter 2 focused on the EU's ability to influence the framing of new citizenship laws. In conjunction with Chapter 3, it looked at how the supranational community specifically encouraged specific nationalities like Germans and Greeks to move away from a strict application of *jus sanguinis* towards incorporating elements of *jus soli* and *jus domicili* and the paving of the way for allowing dual nationality. It also examined how EU citizenship could over-ride national citizenship (especially in the realm of social citizenship). This section accounts for the views of the nationalist-populist party members in the four case study countries and identifies the possible rationale behind some of the main arguments that are put forth.

In contrast to immigration, EU effects on citizenship issues are generally regarded as relatively unimportant across the four national contexts. However, in accordance with the theoretical propositions and empirical studies within the existing literature as touched upon in Section 2 of Chapter 2, the removal of the primacy of the *jus sanguinis* principle when it comes to citizenship acquisition in Germany is one of the reasons the REP take umbrage at the EU level impacts on national citizenship. Along these lines, the normalization of dual citizenship in Germany is also attributable to the country's embeddedness in the European Union. Similarly, consistent with the literature on EU-induced convergence of citizenship

¹⁰⁴⁴ Greater Romania Party newspaper. *Statul prinde viteza in spirala datoriilor* (State debt spiral is picking up

rules, the PVV invoke the EU level in accounting for the “dangerous ease” with which Dutch citizenship could be obtained. On the other hand, the findings in the CEE countries are somewhat less consistent with the expectations sketched out in the literature review, with relatively specific citizenship-related diasporic concerns overriding any trepidations pertaining to the generic impacts of EU citizenship on national legislation.

These sentiments apply mainly to Ataka’s appraisal of the situation in Bulgaria. On the one hand, the EU impacts on citizenship regulations in Bulgaria are on the whole gauged to be insignificant. While an increase in citizenship fast-tracking for certain nationalities is deemed to have occurred in professional sports in the aftermath of membership, there is a tendency to blame the national government rather than the EU for any such developments that reduce the representativeness of sports teams.¹⁰⁴⁵ It is also seen as problematic that the language and knowledge of Bulgarian history components are increasingly deemphasized as prerequisites to the acquisition of citizenship, which is in part regarded as an outgrowth of the government’s emphasis on the liberalization of procedures in the aftermath of membership.¹⁰⁴⁶

However, a major point of contention from the standpoint of Ataka is that the EU is deemed to have provided further ammunition to the national government’s natural inclination to be very selective and inconsistent with regard to the observance of the rules for granting Bulgarian citizenship. For instance, it is regarded as fundamentally unfair that Macedonians, who usually reject their Bulgarian identity and consider themselves a separate ethnicity, rarely identifying with Bulgaria as a cultural space, are able to be naturalized in an expedient fashion. It is claimed that quite a few apply for Bulgarian citizenship in order to be able to

speed), 13 March 2012.

travel freely within the EU. By contrast, Bulgarians in other countries like the Bessarabian and the Banat Bulgarians who are very proud of their roots and identify primarily with Bulgaria rather than Moldova or Serbia are subjected to very long waits.¹⁰⁴⁷

In essence, the implication is that while Bulgarian citizenship has become more desirable once the country entered the EU, this has resulted in an increased willingness to acquire it for instrumental reasons, leading to it becoming somewhat cheapened. Macedonians are thus gauged to be accorded priority by the Bulgarian government due to it being conscious of the fact that they are on the EU's radar to a larger degree than Moldovans (because Macedonia as a Western Balkan country is currently a prospective candidate for membership, unlike Moldova).¹⁰⁴⁸ In this regard, Ataka's concerns mirror those (covered in more detail in the section dealing with Pan-Europeanism) in relation to the perceived tendency of the national government to shun "true friends" of Bulgaria like Russia at the expense of opening its heart to "historically unfriendly" states like Turkey in order to portray itself as a model Europeanizer. The perception of the existence of double standards to the detriment of Moldova-based Bulgarians (and other "loyal" Bulgarians) is reminiscent of the EU's alleged direct favoring of Muslim Bulgarians (and Turks) over Christian ones, as will be touched upon in Chapter 6. In short, EU membership has provided an excuse for the Bulgarian governments to continue their pursuit of instrumentality in relation to citizenship rather than reorient themselves and pursue pro-patriotic policies. From Ataka's point of view, it is not deemed coincidental that the consulate that was set up by Bozhidar Dimitrov (Bulgarian historian and nationalist) with the aim of "greasing the wheels" when it came to the acquisition of Bulgarian citizenship in Moldova folded in the aftermath of the attainment

¹⁰⁴⁵ Author's interviews with Galen Monev and Shavel S.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Author's interview with various Ataka members.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Author's interview with Nikolay Pehlivanov and others.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Author's interview with Shavel S. and others.

of EU accession, which is assumed to have left quite a few Bessarabian Bulgarians without proper representation.¹⁰⁴⁹ Also, it has to be taken into account that Ataka functionaries' interest in ending the practice of dual citizenship with the purpose of discouraging Bulgarian Bulgarian Turk *émigrés* in Turkey from voting for the MRF party could in theory conflict with EU citizenship legislation.¹⁰⁵⁰

Like in the Bulgarian case, the EU's current or purported impacts on Romanian citizenship procedures are also rated as innocuous and there is no concern expressed regarding the possibility of a standardization of citizenship regulations among EU countries at some point in the future. However, in line with their Bulgarian counterparts there is a desire to amend citizenship rules at the national level, as it is currently deemed too difficult for the "historically Russian-wrapped" Moldovans to become Romanian citizens.¹⁰⁵¹ Still, in contrast to the Bulgarian case, PRM members express no awareness of EU regulations having imparted the wrong sort of wisdom to Romanian governments and changed their pro-nationalist calculations.¹⁰⁵² Two principal reasons could account for the PRM members' stance. Firstly, unlike their Ataka counterparts who generally express a view that the "EU is here to stay" and will remain an entity to be reckoned with in the foreseeable future, prominent PRM members like Funar and Fârșirotu are not convinced of the durability of the EU and envision doomsday scenarios regarding the future of the supranational community.¹⁰⁵³ Besides, there is a strong belief in the resilience of the Romanian people and the politicians' capacity to make the appropriate adjustments. For instance, both Eminescu and Fârșirotu talk with pride about the Romanians' ability to quickly switch from Euro-optimism to Euro-pessimism due to "watershed moments" like the EU officials' attempts to

¹⁰⁴⁹ Author's interview with Ventsislav Lakov.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵¹ Author's interviews with Fârșirotu and others.

¹⁰⁵² Ibid.

prevent them from exercising their voice in relation to the attempted impeachment of Bănescu.¹⁰⁵⁴ On the other hand, the consensus among Ataka members is that Bulgarians tend to be politically passive and are too absorbed into trivialities in order to be cognizant of what they claim to be the hypocrisies of the EU.¹⁰⁵⁵ Thus, from the standpoint of the PRM, at least in the realm of citizenship, it is too soon for the EU to have exerted any overly pernicious influences and there are many question marks regarding the continued existence of the supranational community to warrant too much speculation pertaining to the long-term effects on citizenship.

In accordance with the literature that discussed the EU proddings that brought about the evolution of Dutch nationality regulations, contemporary Dutch citizenship rules are as a whole viewed as lax by the PVV and the EU impacts are judged to be quite negative. In this regard, the preference displayed for the Swiss citizenship system rather than the contemporary Dutch framework is attributable to the ease with which a new nationality could be attained under the latter one. Accordingly, the European Convention on Human Rights is evaluated as likely to pose significant hindrances when it comes to any amendments of citizenship provisions.¹⁰⁵⁶ Similarly, it has been condemned due to having opened the door for the so-called “anchor babies” and consequently orchestrated a shift in the demographics of Europe because of the provisions enabling immigrants to obtain a residency permit by having children, which essentially means that they are almost on an equal footing with the actual citizens.¹⁰⁵⁷

In a more normative sense, the interaction between EU and national citizenship rules also serves to highlight the lack of any “legal self-determination” within the Union. Similarly

¹⁰⁵³ Author’s interviews with Gheorghe Funar, Vladimir Fârșirotu and others.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Author’s interviews with Eugen Mihăescu, Vladimir Fârșirotu and others.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Author’s interviews with Ventsislav Lakov, Mario Punchev and others.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Author’s interviews with various PVV members.

to the PVV's interest in juxtaposing the US and EU "geopolitical mindsets" (as examined in the Pan-Europeanism section of Chapter Four), the EU is unfavorably compared to the United States, as from the PVV standpoint the US states could be considered to be more autonomous and sovereign than the actual "independent" states within the EU. One example of that is the ban imposed on capital punishment all over the EU area, while some US states like Texas retain it and others like Maine have expunged it from their statute books. In essence, the USA has been characterized as more liberal in its constitution than the EU.¹⁰⁵⁸ Thus, EU citizenship rules are another hallmark of the EU's inherent inferiority to the United States and the inopportune ways in which it attempts to flaunt its powers and act with arrogant self-assurance.

Consequently, the expectation is that in the near future Dutch citizenship rules may become exceedingly permissive because of the EU influences.¹⁰⁵⁹ Not surprisingly, the USSR/Comintern parallel is also sometimes invoked to illustrate the hierarchical nature of the EU in relation to the nation-state when it comes to directives touching upon EU citizenship provisions.¹⁰⁶⁰

It also needs to be stipulated that from the PVV standpoint EU citizenship regulations do not render themselves to easy separation from EU impacts on migration, especially in the case of intra-EU migration from the eastern side of the continent. For instance, Kortenoeven maintains that EU citizenship is a personification of the freedom of movement principle and CEE states are eager to cling to it, because it helps them justify the massive flooding of Western European countries. Thus, EU citizenship is chiefly an example of another great

¹⁰⁵⁷ *Stop de ankerbaby's* (Enough with the 'anchor babies'), Press release, 8 March 2011.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Author's interview with various PVV members.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Author's interview with Matthijs Janssen.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Author's interview with Barry Madlener.

equalizer, because it is quixotic in offering rewards on a silver platter to less deserving member states. Arguably, a contributing factor to the PVV's reluctance to separate citizenship from immigration issues engendered by the EU is its tendency to view (unlike the other three parties) the EU level as the primary culprit with regard to immigration-related concerns rather than the national level authorities. Also, it is worth pointing out that PVV members profess a belief in the erosion of the distinction between residency and citizenship, as the former is already deemed to offer plenty of rights because of the neverending EU regulations; in essence, the differences between residency and citizenship benefits could be characterized as superficial, with the value of the latter increasingly becoming diluted.¹⁰⁶¹

Die Republikaner party's pro-constitutionalist orientation inherently puts it on the defensive when it comes to discussions of the EU legal order, with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty seen as likely to compromise the democratic foundations of the German state¹⁰⁶² or even potentially a dissolution of the German nation.¹⁰⁶³ For instance, one of the key issues is the erosion of the citizens' trust in the German legal order which is seen as an outgrowth of the German state's embeddedness into the supranational structures that are able to supersede the Basic Law.¹⁰⁶⁴ While it is acknowledged that the German constitutional court self-sabotages in a number of respects, as some decisions are taken on a political (in response to political lobby groups' demands) rather than legal basis, this evolution is thought to in part stem from its increasing disempowerment due to the pervasive influences of EU

¹⁰⁶¹ Author's interviews with various PVV members.

¹⁰⁶² *Neues Gutachten belegt: Lissabon zerstört den Rechtsstaat* (New expert opinions indicate that Lisbon will destroy right-based traditions of the state), Press release, 24 April 2009.

¹⁰⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶⁴ *Wieder ein Fehlurteil der Strassburger Europa-Richter* (Once again a failed judgment delivered by the European judges from Strasbourg), Press release, 14 January 2011.

legislation¹⁰⁶⁵, i.e. because of the ECJ's tendency to focus more on the rights of perpetrators rather than those of the victims of crimes.¹⁰⁶⁶

The continued standardization of the granting of citizenship procedures through the EU is viewed as quite undesirable from the standpoint of the nation-state because it will destroy the *Eigendynamik* (momentum of its own) with regard to the bestowal of citizenship rules, which is a mark of each country's distinctiveness. Similarly, the imposition of economic embargos (an example of a conflict fought by non-military means) is conceptualized as increasingly problematic if a substantial proportion of the countries' populations is made up of dual citizens who hold double loyalties. Thus, the EU's paving of the way for the increase in the number of states offering dual citizenship is another way to limit the foreign policy options that are at each nation-state's disposal and prevent them from taking decisive actions.¹⁰⁶⁷

In addition, consistent with the literature review expectations, the transformative power of the EU has already been viewed with suspicion in the past, with some members crediting it as a major normative influence with regard to the shift from *jus sanguinis* to *jus soli* citizenship principle in Germany in the early 2000s, because it likely worsened the situation in Germany with regard to the opportunities for integrating immigrants, i.e. due to them being emboldened to flaunt German cultural tenets once they actually became citizens.¹⁰⁶⁸

In a somewhat similar development to that in the Netherlands, the EU legal system is associated with the relaxation of standards when it comes to asylum seekers and is thought to have brought about the erasure of the distinctions between legitimate native German welfare

¹⁰⁶⁵ Author's interview with Rolf Schlierer.

¹⁰⁶⁶ *Schweiz: Kriminelle Ausländer raus!* (The Swiss: a done deal when it comes to criminal foreigners!), *REP Party newspaper*, 2010.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Author's interview with Johann Gärtner.

recipients and foreigners who have recently entered the country. Thus, in a practical sense citizenship rules are thought to matter less because of the additional layer provided by what has been described as Germany's "centralized eurocracy".¹⁰⁶⁹ The German case fits neatly with the theoretical expectations outlined in Chapter Two, with the problems associated with EU citizenship less likely to be viewed through an anti-CEE prism or confounded with EU immigration provisions.

Chapter Conclusion

As established so far, there is an interesting dissonance between the PVV and the REP discussions in relation to the EU's role in the promotion of immigration, both in a practical and normative sense, which could not necessarily be anticipated from the analysis presented in Section 3 of Chapter 2 and the examination of the historical development of nationalism in these two countries. In contrast to the arguments made by the PVV in relation to Pan-Europeanism and their firm belief in the durability of Dutch cultural mores and the potency of Dutch nationalism (unlike the more pessimistic REP assessments with regard to German nationalism), it seems as if in the immigration domain, the Dutch party's members are more inclined to conceptualize the EU as a threat in terms of bringing about pro-liberal shifts in their citizens' mentality.

While it could be argued that the tendency to blame the EU as a primary actor with regard to immigration is attributable to the "more hardcore" Euroscepticism exhibited by the

¹⁰⁶⁸ Author's interview with Karl-Martin Kohlmann.

¹⁰⁶⁹ *Brüssels hebelt deutsches Asylrecht aus* (Brussels annuls German legislation in relation to asylum seekers), REP Party newspaper, 2009.

PVV in comparison to the one subscribed to by the REP, as will be seen in the next chapter dealing with “minority empowerment”, there are important issue areas in which the REP members are actually even less likely than the PVV to be conciliatory and generous when assessing the role of the EU. To a degree the PVV’s more mainstream status in Dutch society (in comparison to the REP who have in recent years somewhat fallen off the radar in their ability to capture the German nationalist vote) could also be a factor in their tendency to be more forgiving of the role played by Dutch national governments and the inclination to view the EU rather than their own national elites as the main obstacle for regaining some measure of control. The risks when it comes to migration control are also perceived as magnified due to the EU’s centre of gravity increasingly shifting to the East, which implies that Eastern Europeans will more frequently be in charge of making key decisions. This sentiment is generally not very pronounced among REP members, perhaps partly due to identity considerations – REP functionaries are comfortable at the present stage placing German identity within the “Central European” cluster and actually prefer not to define Europe in Western-centric terms.

As for the two CEE parties, it is clear that immigration-related issues have not yet ripened into fully-fledged grievances that tend to be analyzed through a EU prism, with the EU’s supposedly pernicious role as a catalyst for emigration remaining at the forefront of the nationalism-related concerns. It is not out of the question that once some semblance of economic parity with the EU mean is achieved (a major policy aim of the populists and the more mainstream parties) and the CEE countries become more attractive destinations for immigrants and asylum-seekers, nationalist politicians will increasingly start setting their eyes on the EU-level dynamics. Still, even based on the current realities, it is evident that CEE populists remain distrustful of the EU’s commitment to supporting them financially when the need arises for them to accommodate asylum seekers in their countries as well as

the supranational community's effectiveness in monitoring its external borders and stemming the tide of migration from the developing to the developed world.

Lastly, one could speak of a general disconnect in the realm of citizenship – in the case of the two NWE countries, the underlying issue is generally that national citizenship is supposedly too easy to obtain for culturally incompatible “others”, while the pendulum swings the opposite way in the case of the CEE parties, with the citizenship acquisition process rated as overly complicated for kin ethnicities or meta-ethnicities like Moldovans and Bessarab Bulgarians. In comparison to the other issue areas that were analyzed in the preceding chapter, the EU remains a relatively epiphenomenal actor in the eyes of the populists across all national contexts in terms of its ability to press for citizenship transformations.

Chapter Six: Minority empowerment, multiculturalism and EU-related influences

Chapter Introduction

Chapters 1-3 of the thesis provided a detailed theoretical and empirical overview of the influence of the European Union in the realm of minority rights, suggesting that minority groups within countries that are members of the Union benefit in a variety of ways from EU influences in a number of different spheres, ranging from the legal to the cultural.

My interviews included a specific question on minority empowerment: “Do you believe that members of ethnic or cultural minority groups benefit from EU membership more than those belonging to the majority and can one speak of them being “empowered” due to the EU?” This question sparked discussion about a range of minority-related issues, all of them analyzed in relation to the EU framework, when the latter was deemed relevant. The narratives of nationalist-populist members revealed quite a few interesting country-specific dissonances.

Sections 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 of Chapter 1 identified “minority empowerment” as an area that is likely to have particular salience from the standpoint of nationalist-populist parties. It was anticipated as likely to be perceived as more problematic by nationalists than any issues engendered by Pan-Europeanism. The chapter looked at the various instruments through which entities associated with the promotion of minority interests benefit substantively (and arguably disproportionately relative to more mainstream ones, focused on the promotion of

majority interests) because of EU normative influences or specific EU policies. Section 2.2 covered the situation of ethno-regionalist parties as a special case and looked at the divergent ways in which the struggles of sub-national actors could be reframed due to a country's embeddedness into the EU and garner the support of larger audience. As clarified in Chapter 3, the empowerment effect in relation to ethno-regionalist parties is only relevant with regard to Romania and Bulgaria, as the Netherlands and Germany lack any influential ethno-regionalist parties that could pose a challenge to the state's territorial integrity and stoke the fears of majority nationalists. Section 2.3 analyzed the enhanced role of informal organizations that occupy themselves with advancing the interests of ethnic minorities by examining the support offered to them by the EU; the arguments raised here apply to all four of the target countries. Section 2.4 offered a historical overview of the evolution of the EU's policies and practices in the promotion of minority rights and also brought to light the existence of discrepancies between the CEE and Western European cases (especially due to the Copenhagen criteria and the asymmetries inherent in EU membership conditionality) when it came to the supranational entity's insistence on the observance of certain standards pertinent to the minority situations in countries. This section also served to highlight how EU attempts to influence minority-related issues could have a polarizing effect on East-West relations as well as creating antagonisms between the various CEE candidates for membership themselves. Section 2.4 thus provided the working assumption that nationalist actors in CEE countries are more likely to feel aggrieved due to EU interventions in the realm of minority rights than their Western European counterparts.

Attention was also drawn to some specific examples of EU successes in expanding the horizons for mobilization in the case of minority groups like the Roma and the Muslims. In addition, Chapter 3 added to this picture by examining the nature of the relationships between

minorities and majorities in each of the four focus countries from a historical standpoint and in the current political climate.

The following pages thus serve to illuminate the ways in which nationalist-populist factions across the four national contexts view the changed prospects for minorities within their countries in recent years and the degree to which the EU is subjectively regarded as a significant part of the equation when it comes to these dynamics and is regarded as culpable when it comes to the privileging of minority groups. This empirical chapter follows the same format as the preceding two by bringing to light perceived EU effects on minority rights and minority activism in a country-specific rather than region-specific context (though the concluding part takes into account the regional dimension, picking up on the theme of the divergences between Eastern Europe and Western Europe). During the course of the analysis, it refers back to the two facets of minority empowerment (regarded as micro-level manifestations of the two main strands of Europeanization introduced in Chapter One) – substantive/socio-economic and normative/attitudinal – and strives to keep the conceptual separation between them, where viable. In addition, the chapter briefly revisits the topic of the national self-appraisal of the members of the majority groups (touched upon in Chapters Three and Four) and shows how attachments to post-national (European) identities might affect the ways in which minority gains are evaluated (especially in the case of Romania). A more detailed overview of the chapter content is presented below.

Firstly, the viewpoints of party members pertaining to the current majority-minority relations in the countries are presented, so that some indication is provided regarding whether minorities are deemed to enjoy a privileged position within society, for reasons that are independent of or precede the actual impacts of the EU substantive or normative mechanisms. Secondly, the chapter discusses the perceived EU role in relation to any minority-related

grievances in each country, with a focus on the normative and socio-economic empowerment aspects (if applicable). Thirdly, the issues identified by party members are analyzed further by drawing on third party sources and any unexpected findings are given extra attention and probed for further explanations.

In particular, in the case of Bulgaria, attention is devoted to the refurbished playing field for Turks and Roma people due to their enhanced legitimacy with regard to the pressing for additional cultural and political rights in the aftermath of EU membership as well as their improved prospects for challenging exclusive understandings of Bulgarian nationhood. In a normative sense, the critique of the presumed tendency of Bulgarian minorities to “Europeanize” (Westernize) Bulgarian nationalism as a result of EU influences is noted as a novel element that is worth further scrutiny. One additional surprising finding which is discussed at length is tied to the prominence of the EU-induced socio-economic angle in relation to minority empowerment applicable to ethnically mixed regions. The rationale behind the viewpoints of Ataka members is brought to light and the insights gleaned from academic studies regarding the impacts of EU funding and local-level activism on specific Bulgarian regions are analyzed. Given the unexpected weight of this particular grievance (especially when directed against Turks in Bulgaria), a number of studies regarding the transformations in the self-perceptions and activism of Turks in the aftermath of membership are also expounded upon.

As for Romania, this subsection covers the supposed normative gains of ethno-regionalist parties (DUHR) attributable to the EU and the degree to which minorities are portrayed as being able to alter the nature of the political processes in Romania. While these revelations were expected and in accordance with the theoretical and empirical literature, the arguments made in relation to the Hungarians’ supposed “special status” within the EU offer

some essential new insights into the mindset of the Romanian populists and are thus elaborated upon. In the concluding part of the subsection, some similarities and divergences with the Bulgarian case are extrapolated upon.

The narratives introduced in the section dealing with the PVV introduce a surprising twist, with the party's inclination to outright dismiss the EU level when it comes to the minority situation in the country remaining a common feature among all interviewees. In essence, minorities are either conceptualized as more sympathetic than the EU itself or as not sufficiently aware of or unwilling to use the EU in order to press their claims. Moreover, the finding is discussed in the context of ethnic threat studies and Eurobarometer surveys regarding the changed prospects for minorities as a result of EU accession.

The German section starts off with the more predictable grievances related to the EU rhetoric of "rights" accorded to minorities and brings to light a number of additional dimensions – it details the EU's purported future influence on the German legal order with regard to minorities and explains the nature of the powerful "behavior modification effect" with respect to German cultural symbols that some members identify in relation to minorities. Somewhat unexpectedly, a minority of members actually echo the sentiments of their Dutch colleagues, regarding the EU impacts on "minority empowerment" in Germany as negligible and not worth discussing.

As mentioned in the introductory part of the thesis, the late 2000s saw a revival of debates within many Western European countries regarding the ways in which multiculturalism could best be understood and whether it could even be considered the most viable and appropriate way to "order society". The EU role in promoting multiculturalism

could also be regarded in an indirect way as a form of minority empowerment, though it is clear that it was understood as conceptually distinct by the interviewees. Thus, a separate section of the chapter (the final one) provides insights regarding the arguments made by nationalist-populist party members regarding the EU's role in the promotion of multiculturalism. The section on multiculturalism does not open the lid on any drastically new revelations, but nonetheless touches upon the differences between Bulgarian and Romanian understandings regarding the EU role in the promotion of multi-cultural practices as well as some of the reasons behind the Dutch populists' tendency to be more cognizant of the EU influence than their German colleagues. It is clear that the CEE populists are more likely to invoke parallels between the EU and past multi-ethnic empires when harping on the supposed unsustainability of multicultural societies, while their Western counterparts display concerns regarding concrete EU policies and the power of Muslim lobbies within the EU.

Underlying dynamics within the states and perceptions of minority privileging

Among all the parties under scrutiny, there is a general sense of recent power shifts in favour of minorities or an existence of an entrenched culture in which certain minority groups are allowed more leeway when it comes to their day-to-day affairs, though this tends to be more evident in the case of the “new” EU member states.

In the Bulgarian context, Ataka members unequivocally regard certain minority groups in Bulgaria (mainly the Roma) as highly privileged mostly due to perceived government and private sector pandering to them. This favoring of minorities is thought to manifest itself in the economic, legal, and political realms.

In an economic sense, the Roma people are branded as the main culprits, as there is a wide-ranging perception that ethnic Bulgarians have been forced to shoulder the economic burdens for the wider society, because they are expected to pay all their taxes in a timely fashion and rely on themselves to support their families, while many Roma people count on social support and allegedly display militant pride due to being confident that they do not have to give an account of themselves in front of government institutions.¹⁰⁷⁰

From a legal standpoint, it is claimed to be dubious that a universal rule of law exists for everyone, because minority abuses are tied to their reliance on parallel legal structures like the *meshere* (an unofficial court which adjudicates disputes between members of the Roma community), with the added caveat that the Bulgarian media are presumed to generally refuse to highlight such issues.¹⁰⁷¹ In this regard, Roma overrepresentation in criminality is characterized as a particularly serious issue in the smaller towns and villages, where there is a lack of sufficient police presence and a population mostly consisting of elderly people is deemed to be inherently vulnerable.¹⁰⁷² Consequently, minority groups are considered to have been emboldened, mainly because of the climate of impunity reigning within Bulgaria, as a result of failings in the justice system.¹⁰⁷³ Not surprisingly, one of the demands that is included in the “Programme Scheme” is for the creation of a new Roma-oriented government programme that could outline strategies which would put an end to or at least substantially reduce Roma criminality.¹⁰⁷⁴

¹⁰⁷⁰ Author’s interview with various Ataka members.

¹⁰⁷¹ Author’s interview with Nikolay Pehlivanov.

¹⁰⁷² Author’s interviews with various Ataka members.

¹⁰⁷³ Author’s interview with Nikolay Pehlivanov.

¹⁰⁷⁴ *Програмна Схема на Партия “Атака”* (Programme Scheme of the Ataka party).

From the perspective of political processes in the country, blame is apportioned to the Bulgarian political elites due to them purportedly granting illegal privileges to the citizens who belong to the Roma ethnicity.¹⁰⁷⁵ For instance, since the mid 2000s, the Bulgarian governments are gauged to have really taken it upon themselves to be minority rights protectors, as evidenced by the statements of politicians like Tsvetan Tsvetanov, former Bulgarian Minister of the Interior, sometimes described as Boyko Borisov's right-hand man, that "in 15 years' time, the political importance of Roma people will increase".¹⁰⁷⁶ Such sentiments also stem from concerns on the part of the nationalists that the Roma people will represent an even higher percentage of the population in the future due to their above average fertility rate and the low birth rate and emigration of ethnic Bulgarians.¹⁰⁷⁷

The grievances in relation to the Turkish minority come out clearly when the role of the MRF within the Bulgarian political system is discussed. For example, as fleshed out by Lakov, the fundamental issue is that in the early 1990s the Bulgarian governments and the constitutional court let the cat out of the bag by recognizing the Turkish minority party as a legitimate political actor.¹⁰⁷⁸ The MRF is universally depicted as an irresponsible political actor that is not averse to stoking the fires of secessionism and caters to the interests of the Turkish minority, while also flourishing due to an overly accommodative media and the accompanying government comfort extended to it.¹⁰⁷⁹ For instance, the MRF is regarded as a main actor when it comes to the concerted efforts to build mosques in areas that are only sparsely populated with Muslims in order to lay the groundwork for future secessionist

¹⁰⁷⁵ Author's interview with Nikolay Pehlivanov.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Author's interview with Shavel S.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Author's interviews with various Ataka members.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Author's interview with Ventsislav Lakov.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Author's interviews with various Ataka members.

demands.¹⁰⁸⁰ In one vituperative commentary, it is depicted as a “modern *bashi-bazouk*” [militias that supported the regular Ottoman armed forces and were known for committing atrocities against civilians] that serves as a vehicle of Turkish aggression against the Bulgarian state.¹⁰⁸¹

Thus, in addition to the sense of injustice felt due to the privileged status ascribed to minorities, trepidations that Bulgaria’s territorial integrity could be violated at some point in the future are never far from the surface. Due to the role of the MRF, Muslims in Bulgaria are regarded as a potential powder keg, because of them being a relatively capsulated community as well as the fact that Bulgaria - alongside Germany and France - has the highest number of Muslims as a percentage of the population among EU states.¹⁰⁸² More concretely, the main concern is that there could be a replication of the Kosovo issue in Bulgaria.¹⁰⁸³ Along these lines, the Turkish state is viewed as complicit in encouraging Muslim Bulgarians or Pomaks to rediscover a supposedly non-existent Turkish identity.¹⁰⁸⁴

In the case of the PRM, Hungarian-Romanian relations occupy the spotlight when it comes to the majority-minority dynamics. Some of the official publications depict Hungarians in an unflattering manner and are premised on rationalizations of moral and cultural superiority. For instance, Magyars are described as descendants of “barbarian hordes”, which settled in Central Europe at a time when Romanians had already made decisive contributions to European civilization.¹⁰⁸⁵

¹⁰⁸⁰ *Ataka newspaper*. *Европейските националисти подкрепиха АТАКА* (The European nationalists gave their seal of approval to Ataka), 17 May 2007.

¹⁰⁸¹ Noev, Borislav. *Съвременният башибозук* (The modern bashi-bazouk), 5 November 2005.

¹⁰⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸³ Author’s interview with Mario Punchev.

¹⁰⁸⁴ *Ataka newspaper*. *Европейските националисти подкрепиха АТАКА* (The European nationalists gave their seal of approval to Ataka), 17 May 2007.

¹⁰⁸⁵ *Greater Romania Party newspaper*. *Dusmani limbii Romane si ai poporului Roman* (Enemies of Romania and the Romanian people), 16 March 2012.

In a general sense, we can see a certain defensiveness when it comes to the minority situation, with an emphasis being placed on Romania's willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty with regard to satisfying minority standards. Thus, minorities in Romania are perceived to be privileged compared to their counterparts in other European or Western countries. For instance, Crașmariu stresses that Romania is very open to minorities, as plenty of minority interest groups are currently plying their trade in the country, with 18 members representing 18 separate minority groups having entered the Romanian Parliament after the most recent elections.¹⁰⁸⁶ In contrast, the claim is advanced that the 40 million Hispanics in the United States are severely underrepresented in the Senate and unlike the two million Hungarians in Romania they are seen as unable to influence proceedings within their national legislatures to any substantial degree.¹⁰⁸⁷ Similarly, the claim that Western European countries provide a fertile soil for the satisfaction of minority demands is contested due to the absence of officially registered Romanian, Hungarian or Roma parties. In this regard, Romania is conceptualized as a poster child, with the addendum that the satisfaction of minority demands even at times results in institutional inconveniences – for instance, debates within the Romanian Parliament are regarded overly chaotic for the simple reason that too many cultural groups have a voice and it is exceedingly difficult to satisfy all of them.¹⁰⁸⁸ In essence, the image of Romania as a relatively backward country when it comes to minority rights is contested.

As for ethno-regionalist parties, the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania is viewed in very similar terms to the MRF in Bulgaria. The accession to the upper echelons of power of the DUHR (characterized as an inherently anti-Romanian faction) has been

¹⁰⁸⁶ Author's interview with Romeo Crașmariu.

regarded as an “accident of history” and attributed to the petty squabbles between the traditional parties representing ethnic Romanian constituents. The rise of the DUHR is alleged to have coincided with the increase in espionage activities in Romania to the benefit of Hungary, with the mainstream Romanian parties characterized as having turned into passive accomplices of the Hungarians.¹⁰⁸⁹ For instance, Romanian governments have been castigated for turning a blind eye to cases involving electoral fraud committed by pro-Hungarian activists.¹⁰⁹⁰

DUHR is portrayed as the main threat to the country’s territorial integrity.¹⁰⁹¹ The reasons for that are attributable to it having a significant share of Romanian Parliament seats and openly pushing for secession of certain regions in the country.¹⁰⁹² For the first half of 2012, it has been gauged to have been the main benefactor when it came to the amount of funds distributed by the Department of Interethnic Relations in Romania.¹⁰⁹³ In this regard, its status as a proper political organization is disputed and it is thought to better fit the bill of a cultural organization (which purportedly only masquerades as a political one).¹⁰⁹⁴

DUHR’s successes in elevating its profile within the Romanian political system have also been associated with the ushering in of discriminatory discursive frames towards ethnic Romanians. For instance, it has been claimed that in political discourses Hungarians are essentially “safe from negative stigmas” and could always escape the stigma of being labeled

¹⁰⁸⁷ Author’s interview with Vladimir Fârșirotu.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸⁹ *Greater Romania Party newspaper. Romania – paradisul spionajului maghiar* (Romania – a paradise for Hungarian espionage), 5 August 2011.

¹⁰⁹⁰ *Greater Romania Party newspaper. Ungaria, U.D.M.R. si recensamintul populatiei* (Hungary, DUHR and census), 28 July 2011.

¹⁰⁹¹ *Greater Romania Party newspaper. Dusmani limbii Romane si ai poporului Roman* (Enemies of Romania and the Romanian people), 16 March 2012.

¹⁰⁹² Author’s interviews with various PRM representatives.

¹⁰⁹³ *Greater Romania Party newspaper. Romania continua sa finanteze din bani publici organizatia extremista UDMR* (Romania continues to offer public funding to the extremist organization DUHR), 14 February 2012.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Author’s interviews with various PRM members.

as agents of ethnic discrimination.¹⁰⁹⁵ Thus, Hungarians are assumed to have an almost free reign within the Romanian Parliament, frequently intimidating Romanian governments into passing laws in accordance with Hungarian interests, by drawing on the threat of withholding from cooperating with mainstream parties, which could affect the latter's legitimacy in front of the international community.¹⁰⁹⁶ Hungary's role as a kin state is also gauged to have exacerbated certain issues, having encouraged double loyalties among non-ethnic Romanians by contributing to the phenomenon of some Romanian citizens identifying as "hyphenated Romanians" like Romanian-Hungarians or Romanian-Czechs".¹⁰⁹⁷ In this regard, it is also alleged that during the most recent referendum in Romania, the Prime Minister of Hungary instructed the Hungarians of Romania how they should vote and they followed suit.¹⁰⁹⁸

The Roma issue is conceptualized as less salient, but similarly to the Bulgarian context, the Gypsy population's low educational attainment is assumed to have transformed it into a "strategic resource" for political parties, due to its tendency to be easily swayed during election periods. Thus, the contention is that political parties in Romania recognize them as a powerful voting bloc due to their sheer numbers and lack of politically informed positions, which has resulted in frequent political pandering to them.¹⁰⁹⁹

The majority-minority relations in Romania largely mirror those in Bulgaria, with two clearly identifiable ethnic minority groups assumed to be almost holding the wider society hostage due to their ability to co-opt key political figures and carve out a niche for themselves within the Romanian political system.

¹⁰⁹⁵ *Greater Romania Party newspaper. Da, veti plati!* (Yes, you will pay!), 23 June 2011.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Author's interview with Vladimir Fârșirotu.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Author's interview with Ghiorghe Talau.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Author's interview with Vladimir Fârșirotu.

In the Dutch context, a number of minority groups are also regarded as unduly profiting from the current political and cultural climate.

From a normative standpoint, the PVV subscribes to cultural universalism rather than cultural relativism, emphasizing the superiority of the Western culture over alien civilizations like the Islamic one and maintaining that not all cultural practices are equally moral. Referring mostly to the perceived negative effects of Muslim immigration, Wilders depicts the Netherlands as the first European country to “[have] ended up in the multiculturalist swamp”.¹¹⁰⁰ The election programme of the party (2010-2015) mentions “positive discrimination” as already having adversely affected and continuing to unduly burden majority groups like Dutch Christians.¹¹⁰¹ More concretely, at the national level in The Hague, Machiel de Graaf laments the costs incurred by the city council because of the need for diversity training (through the putting together of courses and seminars for “cultural outsiders”) and allocates the blame to the “proponents on the left side of the political spectrum, whose dream of a multicultural reality was fulfilled”.¹¹⁰² Similarly, some PVV functionaries at the national level take serious issue with the Dutch Anti-Discrimination Bureau’s assessment that Scheveningen traditional event *Vlaggetjesdag* (Flag Day) is “too white” and not geared towards the needs of national minorities.¹¹⁰³

The party’s ideological profile which combines nationalism with a strong support for progressive values, e.g. in relation to gender roles and sexual orientation, is seen to

¹⁰⁹⁹ Author’s interview with Ghiorghe Talau.

¹¹⁰⁰ Wilders, Geert. Talk during free speech award ceremony, 30 April 2009.

¹¹⁰¹ *De agenda van hoop en optimisme – een tijd om te kiezen: PVV 2010-2015 (Verkiezingsprogramma PVV)*, (The Agenda of hope and optimism – a time to make a decision: PVV 2010-2015) (electoral programme PVV), p. 23.

¹¹⁰² *PVV: Multiculticursussen weggegooid geld!* (PVV: Multiculturalism wastes money!), Press release, 17 November 2011.

intrinsically put it at loggerheads with minority groups like Dutch Muslims.¹¹⁰⁴ Thus, from their standpoint, a process of erosion of Dutch cultural norms has begun in order to make way for the value systems of cultural outsiders. In this regard, the Netherlands' "forced engagement" with Islamic communities is thought to have disempowered vulnerable groups within the Netherlands like women and resulted in very serious set-backs in relation to the emancipation of the individual and the imbuing of society with liberal values.¹¹⁰⁵ The privileged position of (mainly) Muslim minority groups is thought to emerge the most clearly in mixed areas, where Dutch women and on certain occasions men are said to need to keep a low profile in order to be able to go about their business without harassment or threats of violence.¹¹⁰⁶

The enlisting of a number of Dutch volunteers to fight in the ongoing Syrian Civil War¹¹⁰⁷ is regarded as a testimony to the lack of loyalty issue when it comes to Islamic immigrants and the Dutch state, as "their identity is transnational, not even European and could never be pro-Dutch or pro-French".¹¹⁰⁸ In addition, on their return to the Netherlands from such theatres of conflict, these "Kalashnikov toting ruffians" are deemed likely to display the symptoms of battle-hardened soldiers, which could make them potentially even less susceptible to integration than before, resulting in further security issues for the Dutch population.¹¹⁰⁹

¹¹⁰³ PVV: *Bureau Diskriminatiezaken misbruikt subsidiegeld om Vlaggetjesdag identiteit af te nemen!* (Office dealing with discrimination abused subsidies granted to it in relation to the upholding of Vlaggetjesdag identity), Press release, 21 June 2010.

¹¹⁰⁴ Author's interviews with various PVV members.

¹¹⁰⁵ *Inbreng Machiel de Graaf – Emancipatienota* (Contribution by Machiel de Graaf – Emancipation Memorandum), Press release, 10 November 2011.

¹¹⁰⁶ Author's interviews with various PVV members.

¹¹⁰⁷ Slightly more than a 100 Dutch citizens are confirmed to have taken part in the Syrian Civil War, on the side of the Syrian opposition. (*Polderjihadi's betrokken bij gruwelijkheden* / Jihadists from the polders have been involved in atrocities, 2013).

¹¹⁰⁸ Author's interview with Wim Kortenoeven.

At the same time, the PVV members are generally careful to emphasize that their opposition to Turkey or other Islamic countries joining the EU should not be equated with a rejection of the moderate Muslim population within the Netherlands, a substantial proportion of which is of Turkish and Moroccan heritage.¹¹¹⁰ In addition, most interviewees tend to distinguish between “well-integrated” and “problematic” minority groups, with the former category encompassing “culturally compatible populations” like members of other Western ethnic groups, which the party claims to refrain from considering as true minorities. The rationale for this stance is tied to these groups’ support for the democratic principles of Dutch society, willingness to be included in the Dutch culture and ways of life and the low levels of criminality.¹¹¹¹ In this context, two PVV members admit that the category “indigenous Dutch people” is not always very clear-cut, thus they express their preference for judging others based on their work ethic and the interest displayed in following Dutch social mores.¹¹¹²

In short, within the Dutch context, Muslim minority groups are regarded as enjoying a special position in society, mainly due to the recalcitrance of elites to recognize the “true issues”, which has an enabling impact in terms of supposedly encouraging such groups to strive for the displacement of Dutch culture. Perhaps an outgrowth of the emphasis on civic rather than a strongly ethnic nationalism in the Netherlands, the term “privileging” tends to be omitted in PVV discourses, though it is clear that the situation with regard to most Islamic groups is conceptualized as unsustainable and a serious security risk, with some members even expressing fears of a possible civil war within European countries in the upcoming decades.¹¹¹³

¹¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹¹⁰ Wilders, Geert. The best thing would be to declare the European constitution dead and buried, 30 May 2006.

¹¹¹¹ Author’s interview with Matthijs Janssen.

¹¹¹² Author’s interview with Ad van Berkel and Wim Kortenoeven.

Opposition to multiculturalism is in the same vein an important part of the *modus operandi* of the REP faction and the discussion of the minority situation in Germany largely mirrors the way in which PVV representatives approach minority-related questions.

Islamic minorities top the list in terms of perceived threats to stability and German identity, mainly because Islam is assumed to show the characteristics of a dangerous political ideology premised on the subjugation of non-Muslims rather than merely constituting a religion.¹¹¹⁴

In a general sense, cultural relativism, another byproduct of “false tolerance”, is frowned upon, as it is assumed to represent an illogical and intellectually dishonest philosophical and political stance.¹¹¹⁵ This reigning “culture of excessive tolerance” is thought to have brought about the creation of “parallel societies” and defiant refusal to integrate on the part of Muslim immigrants. In this regard, mosques are perceived as offering separate societal centres for Muslims and are thus thought to defeat the purpose of integration, as they are deemed likely to encourage movements towards segregation.¹¹¹⁶ In addition, the above average criminality of “problematic groups” like Turks and Arabs, said to be underreported by the media, and the economic burdens imposed on other German citizens due to a lower educational credentials are considered to be other ways in which minorities profit at the expense of the majority.¹¹¹⁷

German policy-makers are also assumed to be tacitly encouraging minorities due to having an in-built fear of passing judgment on minority groups and being candid about issues

¹¹¹³ Author’s interview with various PVV members.

¹¹¹⁴ Author’s interview with Johann Gärtner.

¹¹¹⁵ *Republikaner unterstützen Jerusalem Erklärung von FPO und Vlaams Belang* (The Republicans support the Jerusalem Resolution signed by FPO and Vlaams Belang), Press release, 7 December 2010.

¹¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹¹⁷ Author’s interview with various REP members.

of criminality and a lack of willingness to integrate. Such attitudes of the political establishment are also traceable to naïveté and a lack of political astuteness on the part of the elite because of a false belief that such minority groups could ever evolve into loyal subjects of the German state.¹¹¹⁸ The lack of Muslim loyalty is claimed to manifest itself clearly during sporting competitions involving German national teams and cultural events.¹¹¹⁹ The “live and let live” mentality of the current German political institutions manifested through the lack of sufficient emphasis on integration is also blamed for the spilling over of intra-minority rivalries into Germany due to newly arrived Turks and Arabs’ refusal to let go of certain historical baggages, which are seen to create negative externalities for the wider German society because of contributing to an atmosphere of general insecurity.¹¹²⁰ It also needs to be stipulated that in relation to ethnic Turks residing in Germany, the influence of minority kin states like Turkey is assumed to have increased in potency following the coming into office of Recep Erdoğan, with the Turkish president believed to be overtly discouraging expatriate Turks from pursuing integration within the host society.¹¹²¹

Like their Dutch counterparts, REP members display a belief that the minority label may in certain instances carry a negative connotation and thus they emphasize that well-integrated foreigners could not be considered a true minority group and definitely do not benefit at the expense of Germans. The Western Europeans and the Eastern Europeans fall within the this positive category, although Sicilians or Southern Italians as a whole were on two occasions depicted in somewhat ambiguous terms, as they are in some respects considered to constitute a borderline case.¹¹²²

¹¹¹⁸ Author’s interview with Rolf Schlierer.

¹¹¹⁹ Author’s interview with Rolf Schlierer.

¹¹²⁰ Author’s interview with Karl-Martin Kohlmann.

¹¹²¹ Author’s interview with various REP members.

All in all, Islamic-related concerns are prominent from the standpoint of REP representatives and minority groups falling within the wider Islamic cultural community are widely believed to be exacting a serious toll on the German state, with the German political establishments viewed as unwitting accomplices.

The EU dimension and perceived effects on minority empowerment

The previous section indicated that majority-minority relations between certain culturally distinct groups are viewed as disharmonious across the four different national contexts, with minorities seen to be supported by the national governments and in certain instances a myriad of pro-minority organizations. The next part of this chapter turns to the perceived EU impacts, in a variety of domains, when it comes to exacerbating the issues from the standpoint of the nationalist-populists. It touches upon the predicted and more unexpected grievances expressed by the populists in relation to the impact of the EU on the situation of minority groups.

Bulgarian situation

In understanding the degree to which the Ataka party members regard the EU as an important actor in bringing about benefits for minorities that are not shared by the majority, one should not lose track of the distinction between empowerment in a socio-economic and a normative sense, as established in various sections of Chapter 2 as well as in Chapter 3. While respondents maintain that the EU has propelled Bulgarian minorities into the spotlight, not all of them believe that the playing field (i.e. potential for minority activism) has been altered in a normative sense because of the country's EU membership of the EU. In contrast,

¹¹²² Author's interviews with Rolf Schlierer and Andreas Burkhardt.

economic factors tied to the improper distribution of EU funds are strongly associated with significantly improved prospects for minorities and actual net losses for members of the majority.

Firstly, in a general sense, there is an agreement among Ataka members that the EU has brought about an increased visibility of minority issues. This is largely consistent with the expectations outlined in Section 2.3 of Chapter 1 regarding the new opportunities afforded to NGOs invested in minority issues as a result of the EU effects on the domestic structures.

In the Bulgarian context, foundations like the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee that are considered to be affiliated with the EU organs are assumed to have become “slightly more assertive” (in the aftermath of membership) in drawing attention to the plight of the Roma population, as taking up pro-Roma causes has resulted in greater legitimacy dividends. For this reason, it has been claimed that law-abiding minorities like Armenians that are well-integrated and contribute to society are never of much interest to these organizations, because their treatment could not be portrayed in a controversial way and tarnish the reputation of Bulgaria.¹¹²³ “Pseudo-organizations” like the foundations sponsored by American businessman and philanthropist George Soros, which are purported to invent racism claims and tilt at windmills in order to sustain themselves, are also assumed to have increased their pro-minority activism in the years since Bulgaria’s accession.¹¹²⁴ Furthermore, some Ataka members like Punchev, Lakov and others also affirm that the ordinary members of minority groups have become “a bit more vociferous” in pressing their claims and “developed an artificial sense of security” because of the country’s incorporation into the supranational

¹¹²³ Author’s interview with Nikolay Pehlivanov.

¹¹²⁴ Author’s interviews with various Ataka members.

community; however, it is also their contention that such groups have always been very eager to clamor for rights and create “illusionary conflicts”.¹¹²⁵

The Ataka members see the EU impacts as going beyond the domain of formal organizations, suggesting that a trickle-down effect to the level of ordinary minority ethnicities’ citizens is also being observed in Bulgaria. Thus, Alexandrov, speaking in relation to the Dobrich, Shumen, and Targovishte regions of Bulgaria, introduces a legalistic dimension to the Bulgarian minorities’ sense of empowerment, emphasizing that minority groups like the Roma are very interested in launching complaints against Bulgaria to the European Court of Human Rights or the ECJ. In his view:

“It is frequently the case that members of minority groups [especially in ethnically mixed regions like Shumen and Targovishte] are more familiar with the EU avenues for launching complaints than with the exact procedures to be followed in order to obtain a national identification card in Bulgaria!”¹¹²⁶

In this context, Asenov takes umbrage at the European Liberal Party (ELP)’s meddling with the ongoing judicial process against a number of Bulgarian imams accused of promoting radical Wahhabi Islam. In his view, due to the warning uttered to the Bulgarian authorities that this trial could be a litmus test regarding the observance of human rights in Bulgaria, they are compromising the integrity of the judicial system in Bulgaria and exerting undue pressure on the judges before an actual sentence has been issued.¹¹²⁷ Another reason this is seen as a sensitive issue is because such statements made by ELP members could result in further legitimacy losses for the Bulgarian courts, which are seen not to have the best

¹¹²⁵ Author’s interview with Mario Punchev, Ventsislav Lakov and others.

reputation. In relation to the legal realm, Asenov thus laments that the EU is supposed to provide a level playing field, but also makes it evident that certain clearly identifiable groups like Muslims are apparently more equal than others.¹¹²⁸

Section 2.2 of Chapter 1 led one to anticipate that the EU could draw the ire of nationalist-populist politicians due to the extra symbolic and material resources provided to ethno-regionalist parties. The former dimension predictably manifests itself in the rhetoric of Ataka members. The complaints regarding the lack of an equal playing field have a prominent presence in discourses in relation to the ethnoregionalist MRF party. In the aftermath of EU accession, it is alleged to have enhanced its legitimacy, in part because of successfully scoring brownie points on the European scene – the contention is that the MRF has successfully deceived the EPP and PES that it is one of the most liberal parties in Europe and its post-accession gains on the international and European scene are rated as “huge”. The legitimacy dividends of the MRF are traceable to the unjust portrayal of Ataka (as early as 2005) as a xenophobic party by the EU structures, with the MRF naturally conceptualized as the antipode of Ataka.¹¹²⁹

In a theoretical sense, in addition to the effects of EU membership on boosting the prospects for minority activism, the supranational community’s supposed lack of scruples when it comes to intruding and forcing its own understandings of multiculturalism on Bulgaria is also regarded as potentially dangerous in terms of stirring up anti-Bulgarian sentiment among members of ethnic minorities. For instance, in an article entitled “multicultural genocide” (referred to by Pehlivanov) posted on the party’s website, the “two-

¹¹²⁶ Author’s interview with Nikolay Alexandrov.

¹¹²⁷ Author’s interview with Adrian Asenov.

¹¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹¹²⁹ Author’s interview with Galen Monev.

faced EU bureaucrats and politicians” chronic recitals of “mantras of minority rights” are directly tied to the Roma populations’ increased hunger for new demands to the detriment of Bulgarian citizens. The concerns identified in relation to that are twofold – on the one hand, such “imposed discourses” by the EU organs are seen as likely to prod Bulgarian politicians into intensifying their pro-minority policies when it comes to educational establishments, factory jobs, and so on. On the other hand, by emboldening the Roma with such statements that set the bar too high when it comes to the “utopian idea of integration” that is seen as being applied inconsistently within Western European states, feelings of relative deprivation among the Roma are thought to be likely to increase, which could trigger violent backlashes on their part. Thus, elevating “fallacious understandings of ethnic harmony” to the level of canon is regarded as likely to have adverse effects on inter-ethnic relations.¹¹³⁰ The perceived demographic threat because of the high birth rate of the Roma also factors into these concerns.¹¹³¹

Vatashki introduces another caveat to the arguments outlined above – he characterizes EU policies in relation to minorities as increasingly poorly thought out and maintains that the EU-led discourses on minority rights tend to introduce false historical realities into Bulgaria by equating Western European nationalisms (seen as premised on colonialism) to the “non-discriminatory” Bulgarian one.¹¹³² Thus, in his view tensions are bound to rise for the simple reason that the European level could help rebrand the Bulgarian national model as an “intolerant” one and “market” it to minorities, which could amplify their existing grievances (which are at this stage thought to be quite ill-defined).¹¹³³ Such opinions are consistent with the tendency of the Ataka party to stress that in Bulgaria there is only “one nation” (if not in

¹¹³⁰ Author’s interview with Nikolay Pehlivanov.

¹¹³¹ Author’s interviews with various Ataka members.

¹¹³² Author’s interview with Roumen Vatashki.

¹¹³³ Ibid.

an ethnic, then at least in a cultural and linguistic sense), as also stipulated in the Bulgarian constitution. For this reason, some interviewees prefer to speak of “ethnic or religious groups” rather than minorities.¹¹³⁴ In essence, there are clearly substantial concerns that in a rhetorical sense the EU could make the categories of “majority” and “minority” much more rigorous. A 2011 article by Lukova also posits that in the aftermath of EU membership the Bulgarian media have started to focus on topics related to ethnicity with greater frequency than before (and implies that this has increased the potential for ethnic conflict) and this is seen as an outgrowth of EU minority policies.¹¹³⁵

Aside from existing or potential normative shifts engendered by the EU which have been discussed so far both in connection to pro-minority organizations and minority parties, minority empowerment in terms of socio-economic aspects like the redistribution of resources holds special resonance from the standpoint of Ataka representatives. The direct and indirect role of ethno-regionalist parties like the MRF is stressed with regard to the successful use of loopholes in securing financial injections for its constituents. Those members who emphasize this point tend to be quite familiar with the regional level, especially outside the capital city of Sofia, but this concern also registers on the radar of members of the national parliament.

One of the underlying issues identified is that money originating from EU sources are distributed between hundreds of foundations that are presumed to be solely interested in advancing the interests of members of ethnic minorities. As there is no proper accounting, it is gauged to be quite difficult to publicize such abuses. The fairness standards are thus assumed to be compromised, not only from the standpoint of young Bulgarian families, but

¹¹³⁴ Author’s interview with Mario Punchev.

¹¹³⁵ Lukova, Kalina. *Темата етнос в медийния език на пресата преди и след присъединяването на България към Европейския Съюз - психолингвистични и социолингвистични аспекти* (The theme of

also with regard to helping secure livelihoods for non-threatening minorities like Armenians.¹¹³⁶ In particular, the EU regional development programmes are regarded as a major vehicle for the allocation of funds for the construction of houses and apartments for Roma people who nonetheless are still deemed likely to voice complaints of discrimination. One estimate made by Asenov is that 70 government programmes and projects appropriating EU funds directly aid the Roma population in Bulgaria,¹¹³⁷ while Alexandrov maintains that 82 different organizations operating within Bulgaria are concerned exclusively with minority rights and possess close ties with the EU structures.¹¹³⁸ In addition to being overly proactive in favor of the Roma, EU development programmes are thought to delicately brush off issues relevant to the indigenous Bulgarians. Asenov's contention is that in accordance with the EU administrators' platitudes it is virtually impossible to be an ethnic Bulgarian and qualify as a person who is below the poverty line.¹¹³⁹ As summed up by the regional party leader:

“The EU demonstrates racism by providing funds exclusively for Roma integration while ignoring the plight of Bulgarian pensioners who are sometimes literally dying from hunger.”¹¹⁴⁰

He also points out that since the early 1990s Roma have been benefiting from affirmative action when it comes to police appointments in certain areas of the country and the EU has not attempted to do anything to reverse this trend.¹¹⁴¹

ethnicity in media discourses in Bulgaria before and after Bulgaria's accession to the European Union – psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic aspects) (2011).

¹¹³⁶ Author's interview with Nikolay Pehlivanov.

¹¹³⁷ Author's interview with Adrian Asenov.

¹¹³⁸ Author's interview with Nikolay Alexandrov.

¹¹³⁹ Author's interview with Adrian Asenov.

¹¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹¹⁴¹ Ibid.

In addition to their supposedly discriminatory character, the EU-administered “minority integration” programmes are assessed as misguided due to the prevailing lax regulations and lack of oversight mechanisms when it comes to living arrangements.¹¹⁴² For instance, Asenov draws attention to the construction of condominiums in Yambol (to be inhabited exclusively by Roma people) and Sofia financed by such programmes, in which horses are kept as pets and draft animals, despite some of these housing projects being located relatively close to police stations and major buildings. Thus, as an outgrowth of these developments, certain parts of Bulgarian cities (even those close to the city centers) could in his opinion no longer be considered modern by what he regarded as any reasonable person’s definition.¹¹⁴³

While the Roma privileging as a result of recent EU policies is associated with negative repercussions mainly within the economic realm, an even more salient concern is the way in which EU-level development initiatives play out in relation to more historically antagonistic groups like the Turks. For instance, Pehlivanov affirms that the distribution of EU funds in certain regions is conducted in a way that is to the detriment of ethnic Bulgarians:

“The municipal authorities there [in the Smolyan region in the southern part of Bulgaria] are members of the MRF [Turkish minority party in Bulgaria]. If your name is Georgi [typically Bulgarian name], they find a way to prevent you from accessing the EU funds, but if you are called Ahmed [Turkish name], then you are given the green light.”

The major issue is that the potential of Bulgarian entrepreneurs in such mixed regions is not harnessed, as there are limited opportunities for the creation of Bulgarian start-up companies because the EU funding hardly reaches them. As for the ultimate aim pursued,

¹¹⁴² Ibid.

Pehlivanov's contention is that Bulgarians are to be made to feel unwelcome and leave certain ethnically mixed regions.¹¹⁴⁴ A major barrier to the fledgling Bulgarian entrepreneurial spirit during Ottoman times was the lack of permission to own agricultural land as well as the stringent conditions for renting it,¹¹⁴⁵ with Ataka members claiming that "history is starting to repeat itself".¹¹⁴⁶ Interestingly, Pehlivanov refrains from using the rhetoric of "empowerment" when discussing minorities and the EU, but at the same time is keen to emphasize that the EU funds are used as an important MRF weapon to "de-Bulgarize Bulgaria".¹¹⁴⁷ It has to be noted that the EU has also been accused by Ataka members of indirectly promoting Islamization within Bulgaria through the encouragement of cultural initiatives like the European Cultural Corridor Chorlu-Sakar, with a significant proportion of the funds allocated by the EU thought to have been appropriated by the Turkish government for the purposes of fostering "Turkization" of certain Bulgarian regions.¹¹⁴⁸

To put the EU-induced socio-economic minority empowerment theme into perspective, all Ataka members who were interviewed expressed a belief in the economic aspects of membership being especially detrimental to the country. For instance, for every euro Bulgaria loses to the EU (due to the payment of a membership fee), only 70 cents are thought to be recuperated¹¹⁴⁹ and the rate of the absorption of the EU funds by Bulgarian governments is estimated to be a mere 22 %.¹¹⁵⁰ In particular, between January and August 2012, Bulgaria is

¹¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴⁴ Author's interview with Nikolay Pehlivanov.

¹¹⁴⁵ Koev, Iordan. *Развитието на българското предприемачество* (The development of Bulgarian entrepreneurship) (2003), pp. 60-61.

¹¹⁴⁶ Author's interviews with various Ataka members.

¹¹⁴⁷ Author's interview with Nikolay Pehlivanov.

¹¹⁴⁸ *Skat TV. С пари на ЕС Турция прокопава подземни тунели за културно проникване и турцизация на Тракия* (Making use of EU funds, Turkey digs underground tunnels with the aim of "cultural enmeshment" and Turkization of Thrace), 16 June 2011.

¹¹⁴⁹ Author's interview with Ventsislav Lakov.

¹¹⁵⁰ Author's interview with Nikolay Pehlivanov.

deemed to have managed to absorb and put to rightful uses a puny 12 % of the EU funds.¹¹⁵¹ To exacerbate matters, it is gauged that since 2007, the least economically affluent region in Bulgaria (the northwestern region, including cities like Vidin, Lom, Montana and Vratsa) has benefited the least from EU funds.¹¹⁵² In essence, Bulgaria is assessed to occupy the last place among EU countries in terms of properly allocating EU funding.¹¹⁵³ Thus, the perception that the bulk of the funds that are put to actual use serve to advance minority agendas is an especially problematic issue from the standpoint of the party. Also, Zaharieva stipulates that for historical reasons socio-economic conditions have exerted a unique influence on the value orientations of Bulgarians, with economic security considerations still significantly exceeding the importance attached to values like solidarity and tolerance. Essentially, Bulgaria occupies one of the last places in Europe with regard to the degree to which post-material values have taken root among the younger generations.¹¹⁵⁴ Arguably, the uneven development associated with EU funding (potentially leading to a feudalization of Bulgaria in one member's words)¹¹⁵⁵ also strikes a painful chord with Ataka representatives due to helping resurrect issues buried in the distant past. For instance, during the years preceding liberation from Ottoman rule, negative qualities tended to be ascribed to rich feudal lords and tradesmen of Bulgarian ethnic origin, because they were thought of as well-disposed towards the Ottoman authorities and generally distanced themselves from the revolutionary zeal of the masses.¹¹⁵⁶ Simeon Radev identifies this period of imperial domination as having contributed to sowing the seeds for Bulgarians' general suspiciousness

¹¹⁵¹ 2013 Party Programme of the Ataka party. *Планът Сидеров срещу колониалното робство* (The Siderov Plan against colonial slavery) (2013), p. 136.

¹¹⁵² Ibid, pp. 138-139.

¹¹⁵³ Author's interview with Ventsislav Lakov.

¹¹⁵⁴ Hajdiniak, Marko, Maia Koseva and Antonina Zheliazkova. *Модерност и традиция: европейско и национално в България* (Modernity and tradition: the European and the national in Bulgaria) (2012), pp. 42-43 (citing M. Zaharieva. *Socio-Economic Conditions in Bulgaria*, 2006, pp. 185-203).

¹¹⁵⁵ Author's interview with Nikolay Alexandrov.

¹¹⁵⁶ Katzarski, Ivan. *Модерната демокрация на българска земя - поглед върху нашата политическа история след Освобождението* (Modern Democracy on Bulgarian Soil – a Look at our Political History after the Liberation) (1995), pp. 119-120.

of hierarchical structures and of the flaunting of wealth and status.¹¹⁵⁷ The negative attitudes towards the “trading elite” during the final years of Ottoman rule are also gauged to have spilled over into the political realm and entrenched the perception of politics as a “playing field for morally bereft types”.¹¹⁵⁸

Sociological studies have suggested that Bulgarians do not like to compare themselves to other countries with regard to indicators like economic development (even if the states that are the subject of the comparison are objectively less well-off than Bulgaria) and such exercises lead to a reduction in national pride.¹¹⁵⁹ As alluded to previously, the EU membership is seen to invite frequent comparisons between European countries, in which Bulgaria usually ends up occupying the bottom spot, and the economic mismanagement from which the minorities are perceived to reap dividends further tarnishes the already grim picture.

In addition, the pessimism-riddled mindsets in relation to the “minority empowerment” in the economic sphere may have been given further validation due to some MRF members’ tendency to ride the “post-accession hooliganism” wave. This is a term coined by Venelin Ganev and refers to the post-membership erosion of informal practices guaranteeing institutional stability, a spirit of amicability as well as restraint during political deliberations that was typical of the period preceding accession.¹¹⁶⁰ For instance, former MRF leader Ahmed Doğan publicly declared in 2009 that he was sufficiently well connected to allocate EU subsidies as he saw fit, describing himself as “the real instrument of power” and

¹¹⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 118. (citing Simeon Radev. *Строителите на съвременна България/The Makers of Modern Bulgaria*, 1973).

¹¹⁵⁸ Ibid, pp. 123-124.

¹¹⁵⁹ Boyadzhieva, Pepka, Krastina Petkova and Galin Gornev. *Емоционалната енергия” на българската национална идентичност* (The “emotional energy” of Bulgarian national identity) (2012), pp. 64-65.

¹¹⁶⁰ Ganev, Venelin I. *Post-Accession Hooliganism: Democratic Governance in Romania and Bulgaria after 2007* (2013), pp. 34-35.

essentially admitting that he was not opposed to cronyism.¹¹⁶¹ Political commentator Anton Todorov suggests that since 2012 the MRF has become much more adventurous in challenging the Bulgarian ethnic model and the democratic legitimacy of the Bulgarian constitution by actively pushing for the recognition of Turkish as a co-official language in Bulgaria.¹¹⁶² On 26 May 2012, in a speech in front of party constituents given near Ispirih, Doğan made a cryptic reference to the “new mobilization resources and tools available to the [MRF] party on the European level that could help usher in important changes [to the Bulgarian constitution]”.¹¹⁶³

Also, it is worth mentioning that the grievances pertaining to the EU funding mainly lining the pockets of minority groups did not register as especially problematic in relation to the capital city Sofia. The reasons for that are probably tied to Sofia benefiting disproportionately from the EU money transfers in comparison to other regions,¹¹⁶⁴ the city’s high degree of ethnic homogeneity (over 95 % of its citizens declare themselves to be ethnic Bulgarians compared to a 84.8 % average for the country)¹¹⁶⁵ and – it has been claimed - the much higher level of ethnocentrism attributable to its inhabitants, the assumption being that they would be more likely to bring minority abuses to light, either on the municipal or national level, than their counterparts in most other cities in Bulgaria.¹¹⁶⁶ Interestingly, Kardzhali (a region in Bulgaria with a high concentration of ethnic Turks) is also not mentioned in relation to the perceived EU subsidies abuses. This is possibly due to the fact that the high degree of political mobilization among Turks in Kardzhali region does not

¹¹⁶¹ Ibid, p. 35.

¹¹⁶² Todorov, Anton and Meglena Kuneva. *Българите срещу олигархията. Задкулисието на прехода, Част 2 (Bulgarians against the oligarchy. The hidden elements of the transition, Part 2)* (2013), pp. 152-153.

¹¹⁶³ Ibid, p. 152.

¹¹⁶⁴ 2013 Party Programme of the Ataka party. *Планът Сидеров срещу колониалното робство* (The Siderov Plan against colonial slavery) (2013), pp. 138-139.

¹¹⁶⁵ *Преброяване 2011 (окончателни данни)* (2011 National Census Bulgaria – final results) (2011), p. 26.

¹¹⁶⁶ *Dnevnik bg. Софиянци били най-големите ксенофоби.* (The residents of Sofia are the most likely to display xenophobia) (2008).

correspond to a high level of economic mobilization. Besides, Bulgarians in Kardzhali tend to be very active within the local economy, for instance when it comes to start-up companies and from the very beginning have been avid participants in the European Union economic projects.¹¹⁶⁷

Besides, it needs to be indicated that the waiving of all the restrictions (expected on the 1st of January 2014) with regard to the access to the European labor market for Bulgarians and Romanians might usher in another problematic development from the standpoint of Bulgarian (and Romanian) populists. Due to both countries' poor absorption rates when it comes to the EU funding, some Bulgarian newspapers allege that a small proportion of the social funds that were initially supposed to be allocated to the two Balkan states, will actually be used to provide financial support to municipal authorities in Germany and the Netherlands, in order to aid them with the "poverty migrants" (180, 000 is the 2014 estimate for the number of Bulgarians and Romanians who will emigrate to Germany alone) integration efforts.¹¹⁶⁸ This predicted paradigm shift (at least in the opinion of a number of Bulgarian analysts) on the EU level (the initial idea of encouraging such people not to emigrate in the first place by offering financial injections to their home countries is gradually being abandoned)¹¹⁶⁹ is likely to be perceived as especially detrimental by nationalist-populist parties.

¹¹⁶⁷ Lozanova, Galina and Marko Hajdiniak. *Региони, Малцинства и Европейска Интеграция: Анализ и препоръки за политически практики относно мюсюлманските малцинства (турци и българи мюсюлмани) в Южния централен регион на България* (Regions, Minorities and European Integration: Analysis and Recommendations pertaining to political practices when it comes to Muslim minorities (Turks and Pomaks) in the Southern Central Region of Bulgaria) (2006), p. 6.

¹¹⁶⁸ Andreev, Aleksandar. *Парите вървят след ромите – ЕС дава на Германия помощите за бедни българи* (The buck follows the Roma – the EU will offer Germany the money originally designated for poor Bulgarians), 23 August 2013.

¹¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

All in all, Ataka members raised quite a few substantive points in relation to EU-induced minority empowerment in Bulgaria, with both the socio-economic and normative dimensions rated as quite salient in terms of the EU's ability to alter the power balance between Bulgarians and certain minority groups. Ataka figureheads frequently stress that economic prosperity is an important prerequisite for the unbridled expression of nationalism.¹¹⁷⁰

Romanian situation

In the case of Romania, minority empowerment tends to be viewed through the prism of the EU when it comes to the Hungarian ethno-regionalist party (DUHR), with the normative dimension appearing quite significant, though the EU is not believed to have hampered socio-economic opportunities for the majority group due to indirectly privileging minority populations such as the Hungarians.

In terms of reframing issues, so that pro-Hungarian agendas could be pursued, the EU level appears to be a useful anchor for pro-Hungarian activists. Virtually all the EU-inspired legitimacy boosts to ethno-regionalist parties that were discussed in Section 2.2 of Chapter 1 are alleged to be applicable to DUHR. For instance, Mihăescu maintains that it is not subject to doubt that the EU (specifically the EPP) favors DUHR, ignoring the fact that it is a cultural association rather than a political party as it discourages ethnic Romanians from joining its ranks.¹¹⁷¹ In this regard, the EU is thought to have provided ammunition to ethnically Hungarian politicians interested in changing the nature of the administrative divisions within Romania. Harghita County Council member Borboly Csaba is believed to have justified his

¹¹⁷⁰ Author's interviews with various Ataka members.

¹¹⁷¹ Author's interview with Eugen Mihăescu.

preference for the establishment of territorial-administrative regions that include the counties of Harghita and Mureş Covasna on the basis of attracting more EU funding.¹¹⁷²

The crucial region of Székely Land – an area inhabited by Székelys, a branch of the Hungarian ethnicity - is gauged to increasingly be exhibiting “features of co-sovereignty” (slipping under Hungarian control) because of the Romanian politicians’ reluctance to confront the issues surrounding the discrimination supposedly suffered by the ethnic Romanians residing in these territories.¹¹⁷³ Since the advent of the irredentist Orbán government in Hungary in 2010 Székely officials are accused of having become bolder in their separatist claims and are assumed to be keen to “internationalize the issue of independent Székely Land” by gaining access to EU discussion forums.¹¹⁷⁴ In particular, László Tőkés’ appointment as Vice President of the European Parliament in 2011 has been viewed with apprehension due to the presumed increase of lobbying activities on behalf of Hungarians and the improved prospects for the international recognition of an ethnically distinct Székely Land.¹¹⁷⁵ Hungarians have been assumed to be skillful manipulators, employing a “small steps policy” with the intention of presenting Romania with a “fait accompli” within the European community in their desires to create another Kosovo.¹¹⁷⁶ Consequently, political figures like Tőkés and Orbán are branded as “lobbyists” and

¹¹⁷² *Greater Romania Party newspaper. Scrisoarea unui roman din Tinutul Secuiesc: Noi, romanii, ne intrebam daca mai avem o patrie sau daca mai sintem cetateni ai Romaniei* (Letter to those in charge of Székely Land: One has to wonder whether we the Romanians have a homeland and are citizens of Romania), 23 September 2011.

¹¹⁷³ *Greater Romania Party newspaper. Politicienii de la Budapesta se plimba Tinutul Secuiesc* (Hungarian politicians sweep through Székely Land), 23 September 2011.

¹¹⁷⁴ *Greater Romania Party newspaper. Asa nu se mai poate! UDMR-ul si PCM-ul – dusmani declarati ai statului national unitary roman!* (This cannot be happening! DUHR and PCM have declared themselves enemies of the Romanian nation-state), 6 January 2012.

¹¹⁷⁵ *Napoca News. Gheorghe Funar: Băsescu a mers la Tusnad pentru a-i umili pe Romani* (Gheorghe Funar: Băsescu closed ranks with Tusnad in order to humiliate the Romanians), 28 July 2010.

¹¹⁷⁶ *Conferinta de Presa a Partidul Romania Mare, Traian Băsescu e un cadavru politic si nu numal* (Press conference of the Greater Romania Party, “Traian Băsescu is more than a political corpse), 26 June 2009.

“Europeanists” and an accent is put on their prominent positions within European parties like the European People’s Party.¹¹⁷⁷

In addition to providing symbolic currency for the Hungarians, the perceived passivity on the EU and unwillingness to unconditionally support the preservation of Romanian territorial integrity has also drawn the ire of PRM members. On one occasion, the former party leader Vadim Tudor threatened that he would actively press for Romania’s withdrawal from the European Union if the European Parliament did not condemn in the strongest possible terms the Székely Land leaders’ secessionist aspirations.¹¹⁷⁸

In essence, the EU’s tendency to usurp some of the functions of the nation-state and underemphasize the salience of national borders in a rhetorical sense (as discussed at length in Section 2.2 of Chapter 1 of the thesis dealing with ethno-regionalist parties) is assumed to have been put to maximum use by DUHR politicians for the purpose of “selling secessionist claims” to their own constituents and the wider Romanian society, with the EU thought to be irresponsibly refraining from wading into the issues and confirming its commitment to the state indivisibility principle.

Beyond ethno-regionalist party empowerment, PRM functionaries also affirm that EU accession has ushered in concrete developments that have been overly beneficial to ethnic minorities like changes in the electoral system.¹¹⁷⁹ As an example of such transformations, in accordance with the generally strongly assimilationist stance of the party, the provisions for

¹¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁷⁸ *Europa sta, si asa, pe un butoi de pulbere si nu are dreptul sa tolereze politica fascista si agresoare a Ungariei!* (Europe is a powder keg and has no right to tolerate aggressive and fascist Hungary), Press release, 3 June 2011.

¹¹⁷⁹ *Greater Romania Party newspaper. Din nou despre distributia fondurilor judetene* (On the distribution of county funds), 12 March 2012.

minority language instruction in subjects like history and geography (government concessions brought about in part due to EU insistences) have been viewed with concern due to the possibility that they could contribute to the weakening of Romanian national identity. Such measures of accommodating minorities are associated with a reduced awareness of Romanian contributions to European history and civilization as well as potential loss of the sense of national dignity.¹¹⁸⁰

Pro-Hungarian groups and their constituents have not been the only beneficiaries from EU-imposed policies from the standpoint of the party. “European experts” have additionally been accused of double standards and being deliberately obtuse due to allegedly discouraging Romania from launching complaints against Serbia because of the treatment of the Romanian minority within the country. The PRM has advanced the claim that despite Romania’s restraint and “soft diplomacy” (through the use of proper EU channels) when it came to its attempts to improve the plight of Romanians in Vojvodina, the EU has on occasions attempted to unfairly silence Romania on the matter – the rationale being that the EU wants to reduce the number of obstacles to Serbia’s future accession into the Union (in order to wrest the country away from the Russian sphere of influence). In this sense, the party claims to be calling the moral bluff of the EU, as political and geo-strategic considerations actually seem to be higher priorities for the EU than a true commitment to ameliorating minority situations.¹¹⁸¹ In this regard, the urging of Romania by EU officials to recognize the independence of Kosovo despite the sensitive situation within the country due to the

¹¹⁸⁰ *Greater Romania Party newspaper. Academician Dinu C Giurescu: Ce este national in “Legea educatiei nationale”? O putem socoti, cu temei, “Legea educatiei fara patrie”* (Academic Dinu C Giurescu: What is national when it comes to “national education”? We can consider it to be a form of instruction that leads to a sense that one does not have a home), 19 May 2011.

¹¹⁸¹ *Greater Romania Party newspaper. Multitim de sfaturi, nu serbim.* (Thanks for the advice, but not the actual service offered), 21 March 2012.

secessionist claims of Hungarian minorities has also been characterized as totally lacking any semblance of political astuteness.¹¹⁸²

Similarly to the Bulgarian case, ethnic Romanian birth rates are quite low and concerns have manifested themselves among party members that current minority groups like Roma will constitute a majority at some point in the future.¹¹⁸³ In this regard, the Fundamental Rights and Citizenship EU Programme (funded by the European Commission) has also been negatively received by the PRM due to its supposedly negative implications for birth rates because of perceived overemphasis on the struggles of sexual minorities. It has been blamed for airing propaganda against the traditional nuclear family in Romanian schools.¹¹⁸⁴

Having outlined a number of the negatively perceived EU impacts that are associated with tilting the balance of power in favor of minority groups, it is also essential to identify the rationale behind the party's beliefs that the Romanians find it difficult to curry favor with EU structures.

One of the reasons brought up is traceable to the PRM's impression (explained in detail in the Pan-Europeanism section of the thesis) that the EU is not inclined to treat Romania as an equal and feels no compunctions in simply dumping its issues on the Balkan state:

¹¹⁸² *Greater Romania Party newspaper. Parlamentul European cere Romaniei sa recunoasca independent provinciei separatiste Kosovo* (European Parliament calls on Romania to recognize the independence of the breakaway province of Kosovo), 29 March 2012.

¹¹⁸³ Author's interviews with various PRM members.

¹¹⁸⁴ *Greater Romania Party newspaper. Propaganda homosexuală în școlile din București* (Homosexual propaganda in Bucharest schools), 17 May 2010.

“As a result of EU membership we are expected to obey without question when they [the EU institutions] say to us – we will give you money and it is your duty to integrate them [the Roma people].”¹¹⁸⁵

In essence, the European Union is accused of overemphasizing national distinctiveness and country of origin principle when it comes to Roma integration, placing the burden of the Roma expelled from other European countries on the Romanian state, but does not mention borders when the discussions revolve around petroleum and Romanian natural resources as a whole.¹¹⁸⁶ Thus, the Roma people, who are seen as major culprits in tarnishing the Romanian reputation abroad due to their reputation for criminality and similarly sounding ethnic designation,¹¹⁸⁷ are equipped with an even stronger belief than before that the Romanian state has a special duty to cater to them once they return home. They consequently continue to act with impunity.¹¹⁸⁸ Crașmariu mentioned in his interview that the similarity between the terms ‘Roma’ and ‘Romania’ increases the West European tendency to neglect the differences between the two populations, and, according to academic studies, Romanians have suffered more than other East Europeans from the category conflation of “Roma” and “Romanian”.¹¹⁸⁹ They have staunchly attempted to emphasize that their identity is highly distinct from the Roma one, which is possibly an additional contributing factor to the resentment displayed towards the Roma who are returned to Romania.¹¹⁹⁰ In essence, the EU’s supposed tendency to export its Roma-related issues to Romania interacts with the PRM’s resentment due to Romanians being allegedly “de-Europeanized” by Westerners because of being

¹¹⁸⁵ Author’s interview with Romeo Crașmariu.

¹¹⁸⁶ Author’s interview with Vladimir Fârșirotu.

¹¹⁸⁷ Author’s interview with Romeo Crașmariu.

¹¹⁸⁸ Author’s interviews with various PRM members.

¹¹⁸⁹ Fox, Jon E., Laura Morosanu and Eszter Szilassy. *The Racialization of the New European Migration to the UK* (2012), p. 688.

¹¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

conceptualized as equivalent to the Roma and thus automatically confined to the non-European corner.

In the case of the Hungarians, the normative dimension is especially salient, as they are assumed to be much more of a “teacher’s pet” from the standpoint of core EU countries than the Romanians. While the EU is not always conceptualized as a major influence on minority issues, Hungarians are described as “interesting to the EU”, as Magyars are thought to have a noticeable presence in Western European countries like the UK. With regard to pro-minority organizations as surveyed in the literature in Section 2.3 of Chapter 1, the Soros foundation as well as key personalities such as Barroso are assumed to be naturally well disposed towards Hungary.¹¹⁹¹ More concretely, the Hungarians’ relative connectedness at the EU level is deemed to place them in a perfect position to support their ethnic kin in Romania, because many EPP members are likely to engage in lobbying the appropriate channels on their behalf.¹¹⁹² Mihăescu characterizes the EU policies in relation to minorities as a “communist way of ruling”, as the EU politicians have it as their underlying aim to use minorities against the majority, with the latter (Hungarians) regarded as “more equal” than Romanians in the eyes of the supranational community.¹¹⁹³ In addition, unlike the Ataka members who generally maintain that the Western European countries’ inclusive policies in relation to minorities will come to bite them in the back at some point in the future, PRM politicians like Funar hold the opposite opinion. In the view of the former mayor of Cluj and leader of the PRM, countries like France have it easy compared to Romania, because they practically lack minorities and do not have to deal with secessionist claims, as even visible minorities are said to be perfectly loyal to the state. Currently, the issue from the PRM standpoint is that the EU (in promoting minority rights in Romania) is oblivious to the actual

¹¹⁹¹ Author’s interview with Romeo Crașmariu.

situation in the country and does not take into account that one particular minority (the Hungarians) could “never be loyal” to the Romanian state.¹¹⁹⁴

The social capital accumulated by the Hungarians among the EU level officials is attributable to their earlier initiation into the European family (they joined the EU three years prior to the Romanians) and the fact that they have always been close to Austria and Germany in a cultural sense and also in terms of their geographical location.¹¹⁹⁵ This perception is consistent with the somewhat negative views expressed in relation to technocratic EU countries like Germany in the Pan-Europeanism section of the thesis. Furthermore, the Magyars’ “sweet version of communism” that saw some capitalistic practices retaining their hold on the economy is assumed to have helped foster a certain bias in the minds of other EU members and caused them to view the Hungarians as distinct from the Bulgarians and the Romanians in the sense of being less connected to the Soviet bloc and more connected to the European mainstream.¹¹⁹⁶

Still, it has to be mentioned that political rivalries (between Liberals, Socialists, and so on) in the EU arena are gauged as more important than those involving members of different nationalities and most EU officials are not characterized as exhibiting any obsessions with minority issues.¹¹⁹⁷ Especially in a socio-economic sense, there is also a degree of acknowledgment that it would be difficult to separate the gains made by minorities as the result of the EU with those made by the majority group:

¹¹⁹² Author’s interview with Vladimir Fârșirotu.

¹¹⁹³ Author’s interview with Eugen Mihăescu.

¹¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁹⁵ Author’s interview with Romeo Crașmariu.

¹¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

“No, minorities have not benefited more [than Romanians] from EU membership, Romania should be looked as a whole when it comes to impacts from the EU, be it economic or political”.¹¹⁹⁸

Thus, during the course of the interviews, there was no indication that EU-sponsored development programmes were regarded as problematic in terms of frequently ignoring the plight of economically disadvantaged ethnic Romanians at the expense of Roma or Hungarians.¹¹⁹⁹ This finding represents a somewhat surprising point of contrast with the grievances identified in the Bulgarian case given that the economic effects of EU membership on Romania tend to be regarded as similarly negative¹²⁰⁰ as those in its southern neighbor, for instance when it comes to the benefits accrued from EU funding¹²⁰¹ and DUHR are presumably more influential within Hungary than the MRF is in Bulgaria, as revealed by academic studies in Chapter 3 (Romanian section). In addition, Romania, especially in the immediate aftermath of membership, experienced serious issues with the proper absorption of EU funds. In October 2007, the EU Commission warned Romania that EU funding that was to be allocated to the agricultural development of the country could be withheld due to its lacking administrative mechanisms for the distribution of funds, while during the same time period Bulgaria’s progress in this regard was rated as “satisfactory”.¹²⁰²

All in all, it would be fair to say that from a practical standpoint, Romanian nationalists assume that EU membership has not seriously affected the degree of activism and the influence exerted by non-party affiliated minorities like Roma to any substantial extent. The

¹¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹⁹ Author’s interviews with various PRM representatives.

¹²⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹²⁰¹ *Greater Romania Party newspaper. Cum finantam Occidentul* (How the West deals with finances), 16 November 2011.

ethnoregionalist DUHR is a major exception to that, as it is regarded as being constantly engaged in utilizing the EU structures for the sake of elevating its profile. Ataka members tend to ascribe a high degree of agency to individual ethnic minorities (viewing them as having a mind of their own, and not conflating them with the MRF umbrella organisation), while minority issues are consistently viewed through the prism of DUHR among the PRM politicians.¹²⁰³ In somewhat of a contrast to the Bulgarian case, the normative frame of minority empowerment is much more salient than the socio-economic one, mainly because of the more overt secessionist aspirations of the DUHR party.¹²⁰⁴ This is consistent with the arguments made in Chapter 3 (Romanian section) pertaining to the tendency of DUHR to be more outward-oriented and less reliant on the Romanian state (its host state) in terms of the distribution of resources in comparison to the MRF and Bulgaria. At the same time, the findings provided no validation to the contention introduced in Chapter 2 (section comparing Eastern European with Western European nationalisms) that ethnically inclined nationalists like the PRM are likely to attach a higher degree of importance to EU-triggered minority empowerment than the relatively civically nationalist Ataka.

Also, it is worth noting that the discussions in Bulgaria and Romania reveal that relatively more “privileged minorities” like Hungarians and Turks are deemed more likely to benefit from normative and socio-economic Europeanization, with the EU-induced threat potential of more downtrodden groups like the Roma viewed as lower. This is consistent with the thesis advanced by Kohler-Koch and Beyer (discussed in Section 2.3 of Chapter 1) that representational difficulties of minority organizations on the national level also tend to affect their performance on the European level. However, unlike the PRM members who pontificate regarding the Hungarians’ symbolic capital within the EU, the Turks’ capacity for activism

¹²⁰² Tsachevski, Venelin. *Балканите. Трудният път към обединена Европа (The Balkans. The difficult path towards a united Europe)* (2008), p. 145.

¹²⁰³ Author’s interviews with various PRM members.

¹²⁰⁴ Ibid.

and advancement of minority-specific demands on the EU level is generally not regarded as especially problematic for Bulgaria by Ataka politicians.¹²⁰⁵ These divergences in attitudes could be reflective of the Ataka members' understanding of the special nature of the debates surrounding Turkey on the EU level, where influential countries like Germany are generally conceptualized as consistent "accession spoilers", while Hungary's European credentials are rarely challenged, even by nationalist-populist parties like the PVV.

Section 2.4 of Chapter 1 discussed Marc Weller's assertion that minority representative groups in newly acceded states could make use of their new rights gained in the aftermath of membership in order to threaten the stability of their nation-state and in extreme cases push for secession of certain regions. This appears to be a more prominent concern from the standpoint of the PRM, but the more indirect minority empowerment effects with a socio-economic dimension are generally rated as more salient by the members of the Ataka party. However, in relation to Ataka's opposition to the Islamization of Bulgaria (concerns like that rarely register on the PRM functionaries' radar), it needs to be pointed out that Ataka's staunch rejection of Turkish membership could arguably also be associated with fears of EU-induced empowerment of Islamist groups of "Neo-Ottoman persuasion".

Dutch situation

As for the PVV stances on the matter, it appears that minority empowerment is not in any way a significant trigger for Euroscepticism. No hidden agendas are ascribed to most minorities and they are unlikely to be viewed as a monolithic bloc or to invest in pursuing certain anti-Dutch agendas. For instance, left-wing parties are thought to exploit minorities for their own goals, but the reality is that the latter are not too interested in involving

¹²⁰⁵ Author's interviews with various Ataka members.

themselves in politics, preferring to simply strive for improving their prospects in life.¹²⁰⁶ Similarly, another member asserts that minorities within the Netherlands are not too vocal and do not press for group rights, rarely relying on EU channels to attain resolution to their grievances.¹²⁰⁷ Thus, it is claimed that even minority groups tend to acknowledge that the Dutch system of dispute resolution is superior to almost any other; in this regard, the PVV members' understanding is that the ECHR is mostly relied upon by Italy and Spain and there are not too many Dutch complaints.¹²⁰⁸

In relation to these sentiments, Van der Stoep sees the EU as forging a common bond between majority and minority populations.

“No, minorities do not benefit more from the EU compared to members of majority groups. All people from all groups within the Netherlands could unite against the EU.”

He maintains that the late Pim Fortuyn's vision was the right one – the Netherlands should close its borders and deal with all its issues on its own and by being fair to both majority and minority groups. Getting rid of the EU is assumed likely to give a boost to integration efforts, as this disengagement from the supranational community could give all Dutch citizens a new feeling of pride, which will cut across both minority and majority lines.¹²⁰⁹ Van der Stoep's rhetoric is reflective of what has been characterized as the inclusive spirit of Dutch nationalism in its interactions with outsiders – from the standpoint of some Dutch scholars on colonialism, the Netherlands have always displayed a special concern for the predilection of indigenous/minority societies and have favorably compared their efforts to

¹²⁰⁶ Author's interview with Ad van Berkel.

¹²⁰⁷ Author's interview with PVV EP election candidate.

¹²⁰⁸ Author's interview with Daniël van der Stoep.

¹²⁰⁹ Ibid.

give every minority their due with those of allegedly more brutal imperial regimes like the British and the French ones.¹²¹⁰ Thus, as this argument shows, the EU is conceptualized as an annoyance and in an indirect way stifles integration measures, which could be seen to be to the detriment of majority groups like Dutch Christians.

Somewhat along those lines, among some party members from the European Parliament like Madlener, the issue of minority empowerment as a result of EU influences does not register on their radar at all and EU impacts are dismissed as irrelevant and “inappropriate to talk about”.¹²¹¹ While there is a general lack of willingness to view minority issues through the prism of the EU, one aspect which could be associated with the notion of “empowerment” has to do with the potential effects of the future Turkish membership in the EU on the Turkish communities within the Netherlands, which are predicted to be likely to form a “fifth column” within the Netherlands.¹²¹²

Among some lower level party functionaries, minority empowerment arising out of the EU influences is not seen as a serious issue, but the EU is blamed for playing a role in this, albeit in an indirect way. In this regard, Janssen maintains that one issue in relation to minorities is that the *modus operandi* or reactive capacity of the nation-state has been restricted in a myriad of ways: the national government is deemed to have become somewhat less successful in combating the excesses of certain problematic segments of the population.

For instance, punitive measures like taking away one’s Dutch nationality are essentially impossible due to the controls emanating from Brussels. Similarly, Dutch police are thought

¹²¹⁰ Dewulf, Jeroen. *The Many Meaning of Freedom: the Debate on the Legitimacy of Colonialism in the Dutch Resistance, 1940-1949* (2011).

¹²¹¹ Author’s interview with Barry Madlener.

¹²¹² Ibid.

to be unable to use all their tools, because of the illegality in engaging in ethnic profiling at airports and the possibility that it could raise eyebrows in the EU.¹²¹³ In addition, from a deterrence standpoint, while Janssen does not believe that capital punishment is especially moral, he hints that “having the option of reintroducing it” (which could only occur if the Netherlands left the Union) might be conducive to reducing crime rates and ending the climate of impunity supposedly reigning within certain minority communities.¹²¹⁴

Koertenoeven introduces another dimension to the minority-related grievances – in his view, the open border policy of the EU has brought about enhanced opportunities for planning and coordination of activities between radical Islamist groups operating within different European countries, with their aims often assumed to be to target the welfare of ordinary Europeans. At the same time, he cautions that while such Islamic groups benefit quite a bit due to the freedom of movement principle within the Union, they are not in any way sympathetic to Europe as a whole and attempt to as much as possible “avoid touching European issues”.¹²¹⁵ The rationale for their rejection of the EU is tied to the non-Islamic nature of the EU system, the conditioning effect of Al Jazeera broadcasts and the fact that they are already thought to have certain transnational “alternative supranational communities” like the Muslim Brotherhood at their disposal. Furthermore, since the early 2000s such radical groups are assessed to have evolved in a more anti-EU direction due to some European countries’ participation in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars.¹²¹⁶ Similarly, Van Hooff does not believe that specific minority groups in the Netherlands like Dutch Muslims benefit in any tangible way from the EU, as the potency of Islamic ideology is deemed so

¹²¹³ Author’s interview with Patricia van Der Kammen and Matthijs Janssen.

¹²¹⁴ Author’s interview with Matthijs Janssen.

¹²¹⁵ Author’s interview with Wim Kortenoeven.

¹²¹⁶ Ibid.

pervasive in all their spheres of life that such groups do not need an extra ally to feel encouraged to defy the Dutch authorities' integration efforts.¹²¹⁷

In essence, similarly to most PVV members, he remains convinced that there is no attachment to the Pan-Europeanism frame among most Islamic minority groups, which is one reason they are in no way inclined to give credit to the EU when it comes to ushering in system level developments favorable to them.

As hinted above, one interesting dissonance that is worth noting is that EP PVV members are more likely to distance themselves from the whole minority issue and regard the EU as an insignificant arbiter, while regionally based members are more aware of and willing to talk about “instrumental” gains by minority groups, albeit without providing too much detail. One possible explanatory factor for that is to be found by examining the different agent attitudes when it comes to the promotion of uniform culturalization in the Netherlands. There have at times been notable disconnects between the municipal officials who administered the cultural component of the naturalization ceremony (introduced in the mid 2000s) and those who were higher-up the hierarchy and were actually in charge of designing the general policies. For instance, the Amsterdam naturalization ceremony (with the municipality playing a decisive role) emphasized the importance of Amsterdam within Dutch history, as it was at one point the center of the global economy, and stressed a narrowly defined Dutch identity:

“Dutch intellectuals were busy defining Dutch culture in terms of European civilization, but the naturalization ceremony [at the municipal level, organized by bureaucrats] linked it to nationalist history and local folklore”.¹²¹⁸

¹²¹⁷ Author's interview with Joost van Hooff.

In this regard, certain municipalities are gauged to have hijacked the ceremony and inserted their own nationalist message in it, creating a more exclusionary understanding of Dutch national identity.¹²¹⁹ These clear differences between Dutch officials sympathizing with the notion of “cultural essentialism within the Netherlands” suggest a tendency for lower-ranked functionaries within parties or the bureaucratic apparatus to be more inclined towards imposing conformity on minority groups.

However, in any case, the consensus established is that minority empowerment is certainly a relatively low salience issue from the standpoint of PVV party representatives. One of the reasons for that and the absence of a perceived socio-economic dimension of empowerment could be tied to most PVV representatives’ conviction that the EU has been and is still somewhat of an asset for the Netherlands in the economic realm (in marked contrast to in the case of the Bulgarian state). For instance, the PVV’s sentiments with regard to the economic influences of the EU run the gamut from recognition that the EU has contributed to the economic growth of the Netherlands since the 1950s in line with the Dutch identity as a trading country¹²²⁰ to a willingness to concede that economic cooperation within the EU could still be desirable.¹²²¹ As summed up by Van der Kammen:

“The only thing Brussels is good for is making it possible that countries could trade without too many restrictions. The EU should be a way of letting our economies grow, no more”.¹²²²

¹²¹⁸ Verkaaik, Oskar. *The cachet dilemma: ritual and agency in new Dutch nationalism* (2010), p. 74.

¹²¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 76.

¹²²⁰ Author’s interview with Matthijs Janssen.

¹²²¹ Author’s interviews with various PVV members.

Thus, despite the serious concerns expressed in relation to the propping up of the economies of more impoverished countries within the Eurozone, the Dutch economy appears to still be regarded as sufficiently competitive by PVV members and this likely predisposes them to view socio-economic gains made by minorities as a result of the EU influences in a less threatening light than their counterparts in the Eastern European countries, where economic under-development (relative to the EU mean) frequently tends to be brought up as an issue that needs addressing.

Nonetheless, despite the reasons identified for the PVV's stances, this finding is quite noteworthy and goes against the theoretical expectations outlined in Sections 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 of Chapter 1 as well as in Chapter 3 in a variety of ways. For instance, although ethnic threat studies demonstrate that there is a very strong co-relation between ethnic fears and Euroscepticism on the level of ordinary citizens in the Netherlands (as presented in the country profile section), this right-wing party does not see the EU level in itself as having boosted the prospects for minorities. Interestingly, studies of Eurosymbols in countries like Denmark have demonstrated that visible minorities actively refer to Europe and regard the adoption of a European identity as a way to display defiance to a society that from their standpoint does not allow them to integrate.¹²²³ The 2006 European Social Survey shows that across nearly all national contexts, minority populations are more likely to be supportive of further EU integration than their majority counterparts,¹²²⁴ with this relationship holding the strongest for one particular minority group - Muslims.¹²²⁵ However, from the PVV's view, such sentiments among minority groups are definitely lacking. In the PVV's estimation, it is

¹²²² Author's interview with Patricia van der Kammen.

¹²²³ Dutceac Segesten, Anamaria. *Same Europe, East or West? Eurosymbols in Copenhagen and Bucharest compared* (2013).

¹²²⁴ Dowley, Kathleen M. and Brian D. Silver. *Support for Europe among Europe's Ethnic, Religious, and Immigrant Minorities* (2011), p. 315.

¹²²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 333.

the Muslims themselves who are deemed the least likely to embrace a European identity in the Netherlands.¹²²⁶

As alluded to in Chapters 4 and 5, the downplaying of EU-induced minority gains in the Netherlands could also arguably be attributable to Eastern Europeans having filled the niche as the Dutch people's "other", at least from the PVV standpoint.

German situation

Somewhat similarly to the Dutch party members' attitudes, the EU-induced minority empowerment theme does not significantly register on the radar of most REP party members. Gains made by minorities are usually evaluated as being formalistic and a natural outgrowth of the freedom of movement provisions and new EU legislation. For instance, Schlierer does not believe that the changed nature of the EU membership (since the early 1990s) has fundamentally affected the nature of the relationship between majority and minority rights, but believes that minorities in Germany do benefit from the Union citizenship, as it enables them to participate in additional elections and thus increase their visibility within the wider society.¹²²⁷ In a legalistic sense, the EU influence has been regarded as conducive to the overturning of legislation that affects minority interests:

"One could say that minorities are benefiting indirectly from the EU influences, as the recent decisions of Baden-Württemberg courts could have helped stem the tide of family unification, but unfortunately they have been overruled at the European level".¹²²⁸

¹²²⁶ Author's interview with Wim Kortenoeven and others.

¹²²⁷ Author's interview with Rolf Schlierer.

¹²²⁸ Author's interview with Andreas Burkhardt.

Thus, the major issue from a REP standpoint is that the German state has its hands tied when it attempts to interfere decisively (in relation to immigrants or minority groups like the Roma), as the EU is gauged to have the inclination to appear out of the blue and broach the subject of the freedom of movement principle. The awareness on the part of foreign criminal elements that they could not be deported by the German state is magnified due to the EU influences and this encourages them to see themselves as virtually untouchable.¹²²⁹ In particular, Muslim subgroups are deemed to have unduly benefited because of EU regulations. For example, Krisch asserts that German *Kindergarten* have been forced to change their dietary requirements and avoid the display of Christmas symbols and decorations in order not to offend Muslim communities. Furthermore, there is also the concern that Shari'ah law could soon become an accepted part of the German legal order and no one could do anything to stop it, with the assumption being that the EU could clamp down on the German state and issue condemnations if objections to cultural diversity are made.¹²³⁰ In relation to that, the argument is also raised that investigations of semi-legal unconventional cultural practices like polygamy are only conducted if an ethnic German is the offender.¹²³¹ The existence of a supranational legal order is gauged to have opened the floodgates for the societal acceptance of unofficial alternative legal arrangements and entrenched double standards to the detriment of ethnic Germans. It is also stipulated that other minority groups like the Danes in Schleswig-Holstein would not attempt to take advantage of such loopholes.¹²³² In a more general sense, the EU commitment to the promotion of multiculturalism is in itself conceptualized as a form of minority empowerment, as it trickles down to the legal order and plays a part in shaping the sentiments of ordinary German

¹²²⁹ Author's interview with Johann Gärtner.

¹²³⁰ Author's interview with Wolf Krisch.

¹²³¹ Ibid.

¹²³² Ibid.

citizens in a pro-liberal direction.¹²³³ Thus, while the German state is regarded as primarily at fault for the lack of proper policies to tackle criminality, the EU is assumed to be never too far behind in their capacity to exacerbate the situation.¹²³⁴

Similarly to some of the opinions expressed in the Dutch context, while minorities like radical Muslims are assumed to lack loyalty to the German state and likely to have no hesitation in using the EU legal and political avenues against Germany, their general ghettoisation and isolation within the wider society has – it is claimed – caused them to be relatively inattentive to EU-related developments. So Muslim groups are assumed not to be overly proactive in launching complaints, because they are not too politically savvy and tend to watch Turkish and Arab satellite channels which depict the European Union in an unflattering fashion. And while the network of EU resources to help minorities is regarded as vast by the REP representatives, the supposed beneficiaries of them are currently not in the best position to use them.¹²³⁵ The EU institutions are also characterized as responsible actors and are not thought to have tacitly encouraged Turkish attempts to mobilize their “ethnic kin” in Germany.¹²³⁶

From a normative standpoint, the REP functionaries also emphasize the social conditioning effects of the EU since the early 1990s as having brought about a “new safety net for minorities”. More concretely, the rhetoric of EU-level judges is regarded as problematic, as they constantly mention minority rights, but conveniently refrain from mentioning duties like not stealing, going to school and being productive members of

¹²³³ Author’s interview with Karl-Martin Kohlmann.

¹²³⁴ Author’s interview with Alfred Dagenbach.

¹²³⁵ Author’s interview with Köln REP member.

¹²³⁶ Author’s interview with Rolf Schlierer.

society.¹²³⁷ For instance, Gärtner is convinced that constantly lobbying for new rights has almost become like a game for minority groups, because they are aware that the supranational structures are on their side.¹²³⁸ Consistent with the sentiments expressed in relation to the other EU members' implied tendency to mock German nationalism, Germany is characterized as being in a special position within the EU because of the German historical guilt still being exploited in EU circles. Thus, for largely normative reasons, any German government-led measures that could mirror the Sarkozy government's expulsion of Roma people would be absolutely unthinkable.¹²³⁹

In this regard, it is speculated that the degree of minority disrespect currently alleged to be displayed towards German identity symbols and the intimidation of Germans would not be at such elevated levels without the EU being in the picture. Minorities are claimed to frequently make statements along the lines of "them soon going to be in charge of the country and be the ones in control".¹²⁴⁰ In that regard, Gärtner believes that minority groups are cognizant of the fact that Germany is not a fully-fledged nation-state because of the EU and find it easier to justify their anti-German stances or visceral reactions and bring them out in the open.¹²⁴¹

All in all, the minority empowerment theme is not rated as significant by most REP members in the socio-economic sense, but a number of voices within the party attach a high degree of importance to the normative impacts of the EU since the 1990s, which are assumed to have increased the self-confidence of minorities (their self-esteem assumed to be already at quite a high level) to calculatedly insult German cultural tenets.

¹²³⁷ Author's interview with Andreas Burkhardt.

¹²³⁸ Author's interview with Johann Gärtner.

¹²³⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁴⁰ Ibid.

Multiculturalism and the EU level

Having examined in detail the nature of the discourses in relation to the EU-triggered rises in the fortunes of minority groups, it is also necessary to consider the perceived EU impacts on the promotion of multiculturalism. This is viewed as conceptually separate from minority empowerment, as it could be construed as an ideology that aims to restructure societal models of integration and explicitly targets both majorities and minorities as a whole.

In terms of Bulgaria's adoption of a more liberal and multicultural societal blueprint due to the standardization engendered by the EU, this is viewed as unlikely by Ataka members, but only possible if the Western countries manage to retain the current multicultural framework.

Firstly, the multicultural model in Western European countries tends to be disparaged as being ineffective and an inappropriate system for Bulgaria to emulate. For instance, Monev maintains that "he would not want to imagine living in a multicultural state".¹²⁴² Other members also maintain that multicultural countries are an aberration and "were already given the time of day during the 19th century".¹²⁴³ In Bulgarian historiography, "Ottoman nationalism" has been regarded as exhibiting features of an "administrative and politically shaped patriotism drawing on support for modernization through the the adoption of progressive legal codes and a lack of intention to create a fully-fledged Ottoman ethnicity."¹²⁴⁴ In certain respects, the anti-imperial and anti-multiculturalism stance of Bulgarian (and other Eastern European) nationalists have been seen as attributable to the perceived need to

¹²⁴¹ Ibid.

¹²⁴² Ibid.

¹²⁴³ Author's interviews with various Ataka members.

distance the contemporary expression of nationalist sentiment from the edifice upon which it was constructed in the case of imperial entities like the Ottoman state. In addition to the Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary has been cited as an example of an inherently unsustainable state due to the presence of “28, if not more separate ethnicities” within its borders.¹²⁴⁵ Thus, there is a high degree of suspicion expressed regarding the viability of any multicultural state, even if it incorporates only nominally Christian or culturally Western ethnicities.

By the same token, the inherent pessimism regarding multicultural societies is part of the reason why EU membership is not conceptualized as likely to lead to an adoption of a multicultural model in Bulgaria resembling the one within Western European countries. Thus, some Ataka members cling to the hope is that the EU will not succeed in homogenizing member state policies on the integration of immigrants and historical minorities, because the Western European multicultural paradigm that provides the blueprint for the EU will soon crumble and new policies will inevitably start to take shape in the “old” member states.¹²⁴⁶ For instance, Western Europe is gauged to be in a constant state of flux and there are already some signs that certain processes are eating away at its foundations. This is supposedly illuminated by the fact that minority groups like the Arabs in France are frequently confined to “ghetto areas” and feel discouraged from pursuing proper education, as well as the Roma people deportations from France during the Sarkozy presidency, are assumed to testify to the failure of multiculturalism in the case of Western European countries.¹²⁴⁷ Similarly, another reason why Western-inspired multiculturalism is assessed as a failure has to do with the continued threat of Islamic terrorism and susceptibility to joining radical cults on the part of

¹²⁴⁴ Mishkova, Diana. *Toward an interpretative framework for the study of the politics of national peculiarity in the nineteenth century* (2009), p. 17.

¹²⁴⁵ Author’s interview with Galen Monev.

¹²⁴⁶ Author’s interviews with various Ataka members.

second and third generation Muslim citizens of Western states.¹²⁴⁸ In addition, the specificities of the Bulgarian nationalist trajectory are thought to guard against the coming into fruition of a true multicultural model. In this regard, it is maintained that Bulgaria still essentially sees itself as one nation, while Western countries continue to subscribe to the “divide and conquer” principle in the international (as well as in their domestic) affairs, but will be unsuccessful in exporting some of their insecurities on Bulgaria.¹²⁴⁹

However, among those members who fault the EU as a major accomplice in the creeping in of multicultural practices within Bulgaria, the future prospects are evaluated as rather grim. For instance, one argument that is raised is that the current deficiencies in governance (the loopholes existing and the lack of consistency in policy implementation) when it comes to Bulgaria could result in even more dangerous consequences than in the West if a multicultural model is adopted in the Balkan country. Thus, the assumption is that EU-led standardization could result in the adoption of “an unchecked multicultural model” due to the nature of the Bulgarian mentality remaining unchanged:

“All the integration initiatives [like those in Western European countries] will be adopted without being accompanied by any of the restrictions in the French context, to take one example [bans on the wearing of the *burqas*]. We will be swamped by alien cultural practices”.¹²⁵⁰

The validity of this viewpoint is indirectly corroborated by Lakov who regards most Bulgarians as not being too informed on political issues and lacking a willingness to seriously

¹²⁴⁷ Author’s interview with Nikolay Pehlivanov.

¹²⁴⁸ Author’s interview with Mario Punchev.

¹²⁴⁹ Author’s interview with Roumen Vatashki.

¹²⁵⁰ Author’s interview with Shavel S.

engage when it comes to discussions of relevant phenomena pertaining to nationalism.¹²⁵¹

Thus, the implication is that once EU-induced Western liberalism in relation to minorities gains a foothold in Bulgaria, it will become extremely entrenched in society and the government and regular citizens will not feel like demanding compliance from minorities when it comes to respecting the basic cultural sensitivities of the majority. The key assumption is that most Bulgarians will still subscribe to the “live and let live” mentality (as they do today) and will not become sticklers for the rules, which will disproportionately benefit minority groups.¹²⁵²

Specifically, a number of Ataka respondents also profess a belief that multicultural practices have already entered Bulgaria in the aftermath of membership, even if they are not officially endorsed by the national government. For instance, the issue of “Gypsyization” is regarded as a very serious one and the EU is criticized for putting Bulgaria on the spot due to purportedly not doing enough about the socio-economic integration of Roma people.¹²⁵³ “Gypsyization” is associated with the Roma people’s supposed general refusal to behave in accordance with Bulgarian cultural norms and the militant lack of interest displayed in pursuing proper integration.¹²⁵⁴

While Alexandrov does not believe that parties like the MRF will commonly start taking part in governing coalitions if Bulgaria develops more inclusive electoral rules as a result of the adoption of a multicultural model, he maintains that since 2007 multicultural practices are already starting to make their mark at the lower municipal levels of governance. For instance, he draws attention to the situation in the Nikola Kozlevo municipality, where it is claimed that the mayor of the village of Valnare does not speak Bulgarian and openly

¹²⁵¹ Author’s interview with Ventsislav Lakov.

¹²⁵² Author’s interviews with various Ataka members.

¹²⁵³ Author’s interview with Ventsislav Lakov.

¹²⁵⁴ Author’s interview with Nikolay Pehlivanov.

models himself on the Turkish nationalists. Similarly, it is also alleged that there a gradual creeping in of pro-multicultural attitudes in certain industries within Bulgaria, for example because knowledge of the Bulgarian language is sometimes not regarded as a prerequisite in order to gain employment. In particular, it is stipulated that in the case of the *Shishendzhal* factory in Targovishte, work advertisements make it clear that fluency in the Turkish language is compulsory in order to be considered for a position.¹²⁵⁵ Asenov cites similar examples, expressing a concern that there are serious efforts under way to transform Bulgarian society into a multicultural one, with the EU regarded as a major part of the problem, which is one of the reasons he advocates leaving the supranational community.¹²⁵⁶

When discussing the possibility of Western-like liberal multicultural models being adopted within Romania as a result of EU-led standardization measures, there is a high degree of confidence amongst interviewees that Romanian society would never subscribe to a model of multiculturalism similar to those practiced in Western European countries. Having historical minorities within one's borders is conceptualized as being rather different from fitting the definition of a properly cosmopolitan country. In this regard, the professed belief that Romanian politicians are well aware of the Romanian mentality is seen as one important guarantee that they would refuse to pay lip service to or support the introduction of a multicultural model within Romania, even under EU pressures.¹²⁵⁷

With regard to the linkages between the EU initiatives and the promotion of a multicultural society, there appear to be divergent views among the PVV party members. The European Commission has been urged to "cease its investment in the multicultural drama"

¹²⁵⁵ Author's interview with Nikolay Alexandrov.

¹²⁵⁶ Author's interview with Adrian Asenov.

¹²⁵⁷ Author's interview with Vladimir Fârșirotu.

and “explicitly distance itself from the pursuit of a multicultural society”.¹²⁵⁸ Wilders assesses the EU’s actions in the realm of multiculturalism and immigration as quite suspicious and premised on an “informal pact with Islam”. Quoting Bat Ye’or, Wilders regards the 1973 oil crisis as the turning point, as it is then that EC leaders began building an alliance with the Islamic world to ensure Europe’s oil supply. It is implied that the terms of this alliance included a commitment on the part of the EC elites not to oppose the spread of Islam in Europe, to refrain from insisting that Muslim immigrants assimilate and instruct European schools and media outlets to heap praise upon this faith and portray it in a positive fashion”.¹²⁵⁹ The tendency of elites to be overly receptive to Islam is thought to be exemplified in the proclamations of political figures who are accorded a high degree of respect by the supranational community. For example, Wilders condemns Daniel Cohn-Bendit (then leader of the Green group in the European Parliament)’s declaration that the Swiss people would need to “vote again” following the November 2009 Swiss referendum which resulted in a rejection of the construction of minarets.¹²⁶⁰ Pro-Islamic lobbies are thought to be nested in quite a few European countries, with the EU being a facilitator when it comes to these developments; one example cited are the e-mails sent directly from the Turkish government’s offices to Turkish organizations and individuals in the Netherlands, instructing them to vote for Democrats 66 and Fatma Koşer Kaya during the 2006 elections.¹²⁶¹

Lower level functionaries also express a firm belief that the EU promotes multiculturalism and is a significant barrier when it comes to the nation-state’s efforts to make decisions over the ways in which their societies should be structured. However, some

¹²⁵⁸ *Multiculti is Europees fiasco* (Multiculturalism is a disaster for Europe), 7 February 2011.

¹²⁵⁹ Wilders, Geert. *Marked for Death – Islam’s war against the West and me* (2012), p. 177.

¹²⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 181.

¹²⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 185.

members like Van der Kammen are not too sure whether the “EU does it [the encouragement of multiculturalism] purposefully”, though at the same time it is assumed to be immaterial to dwell on this particular aspect, as the pernicious effects of the multicultural ideology are in the picture anyway.¹²⁶²

From a theoretical standpoint, in a more roundabout way, the very essence of the EU (since its founding) is also assumed to have indirectly shaped Dutch (and other European nation-states’) permissive mentalities when it comes to immigration and multicultural policies. In this regard, Kortenoeven maintains that from the supranational community’s beginning, the bureaucratic mechanisms of the EU have been wedded to the political and psychological notion of avoiding confrontation at all costs, not only between countries, but also within states. This has resulted in a tendency to downplay the voices claiming that “conflict is already here” (in relation to culturally alien groups like Muslims inhabiting European societies).¹²⁶³ As a consequence of these dynamics, today’s EU is forced to skirt around issues pertaining to immigrant access and immigrant integration in the case of “problematic groups”, because it is not willing and is unable to develop counter-measures that could tackle the root causes of the failed multicultural experiment due to being overly committed to passing legislation, but lacking any backbone for decisive action. The general reluctance among EU ‘higher-ups’ to own up and acknowledge the realities within countries is also tied to the decadency and overemphasis on “feel good” feelings among the EU hierarchy, in contrast to the still realistically (in a geopolitical sense) inclined United States.¹²⁶⁴ This argument also ties in nicely with the PVV’s tendency to regard the EU as an

¹²⁶² Author’s interview with Patricia van der Kammen.

¹²⁶³ Author’s interview with Wim Kortenoeven.

¹²⁶⁴ Ibid.

emasculated version of the United States,¹²⁶⁵ despite the latter's open endorsement of Turkish membership in the European community.¹²⁶⁶

In essence, there has supposedly been a gradual trickle-down process from the elite level to the one of the general population with regard to the promotion of self-defeating tolerance when it comes to culturally incompatible groups, which is deemed to have paved the way for the contemporary issues with immigration.

As for the REP in Germany, in terms of apportioning blame for the promotion of multiculturalism, the EU is very much regarded as a secondary actor, with the German media bearing the brunt of the criticism. The main media outlets are depicted as having fallen prisoners to "leftist agendas" and are envisioned as pivotal agents of the national government in its striving to portray Germany as an unquestionably multicultural country.¹²⁶⁷ Still, without membership of the EU, it is assumed that the German state would have been much better equipped to reduce immigration waves and also shown less pedantism in upholding the tenets of the multicultural ideology.¹²⁶⁸ Mirroring the PVV leadership's views, certain ideologues affiliated with the REP party like Ulfkotte maintain that the mollicoddling of "dangerous" minority groups like Islamic immigrants is aligned with EU hidden agendas:

"On the European level, the increase in Muslims in Europe and the Islamization is not only accepted, but also desired".¹²⁶⁹

¹²⁶⁵ Author's interviews with various PVV members.

¹²⁶⁶ Tanasković, Darko. *Неоосманизмът. Турция се връща на Балканите (Neo-Ottomanism. Turkey returns to the Balkans)* (2010), pp. 90-91.

¹²⁶⁷ Author's interview with Rolf Schlierer.

¹²⁶⁸ Ibid.

This quotation is in relation to a 30 May 2006 statement made by Jose Manuel Barroso, in which the European Commissioner emphasizes that “Europe is big enough in order to incorporate Islam as well”.¹²⁷⁰

Thus, since the early 1990s, the EU’s influence in the realm of multiculturalism has been rated as quite significant, though it has still not dislodged the national government as the principal entity that is associated with the promotion of a post-national society. Unlike in the case of the PVV, the national government and elites are envisioned as being fully attuned to the EU agenda in relation to these policy domains.

Chapter Conclusion

As Chapter 6 demonstrated, despite all the parties having virtually the same overall feel for the current situation of select “culturally alien” ethnic minorities in their nation-states, perceiving them as either privileged or threatening to local culture and society, the views espoused in relation to the EU impacts are widely divergent. In the Dutch case, the notion of EU-related “minority empowerment” is consistently rejected and a number of prominent members even sympathize with minorities due to them being likely to “sink with the same EU ship” as the majority. By contrast, the REP party deputy leader as well as some lower-ranked politicians emphasize the symbolic capital of the EU as having brought about an alienation of minorities from their host state or improved the prospects for the passing of pro-minority legislation in the foreseeable future. At the same time, PVV members appear more

¹²⁶⁹ Ulfkotte, Udo. *Heiliger Krieg in Europa. Wie die radikale Muslimbrüderschaft unsere Gesellschaft bedroht* (*Holy war in Europe – how the radical Muslim Brotherhood threatens our society*) (2009), p. 275.

¹²⁷⁰ Ibid.

likely to be suspicious of the role played by the EU (perceiving it to be rather meek) in relation to Turkish involvement in Western European countries' integration policies, while REP politicians like the party leader do not see any kowtowing by the EU with regard to Turkey and characterize it as a generally responsible actor in its interactions with the Islamic state.

In the case of the two CEE countries, the belief that the effects of EU membership are germane in explaining minority gains is more clearly enunciated. In Romania, the normative dimension of minority empowerment is deemed particularly salient in relation to Hungarians, with the DUHR party supposedly having become emboldened in pressuring for the break-up of Romania in the aftermath of the country's entry into the Union. Among Bulgarian nationalists, the two largest minorities in the country - Roma and Turks - are assessed to be benefiting disproportionately in comparison to Bulgarians due to the distribution of EU funds regarded as a zero-sum game, the rules of which are purportedly tilted against the majority. In this regard, Ataka members generally display a higher degree of pragmatism in their evaluations of the plight of minority groups than their Romanian counterparts. However, one less conventional argument made by an Ataka member is normatively grounded – Western nationalisms are perceived as more aggressive than Eastern ones, thus once Bulgarian nationalism starts to be regarded as Western due to the country's involvement with EU-level structures, minorities are deemed likely to begin feeling more justified in attacking its credentials. Interestingly enough, there was not a single mention regarding the processes of conditionality and their impacts on minorities and the nationalist politicians were keen to speak about the post-accession rather than pre-accession-related “minority gains”.

It is not out of the question that the predominance of ethnic nationalism in CEE realm may have contributed to the nature of the framing of the interaction effects between

minorities and majorities – while CEE members appeared to be more willing to emphasize the ancient roots and unique elements of their ethnicity, in both Western European countries minorities and majorities were not necessarily regarded as acutely distinct groups without a cultural overlap. Accordingly, there has arguably been a lower degree of socialization when it comes to the adoption of Eurospeak in relation to minorities among party members in the Bulgarian and Romanian contexts. In the Romanian case, the new freedom of movement accorded to Roma is also a concern, because the bill for their transgressions is supposedly always picked up by Romania rather than the Roma ethnic group; it is only the majority group which has to come to grips with its loss of status in the eyes of the international community. As the chapters dealing with Eastern vs. Western nationalisms highlighted, Western Europe has been characterized as suffering from a “shortage of memory”, while Eastern Europe has been accused of going the opposite way by being too focused on past historical events that create vulnerabilities.¹²⁷¹ In a sense, some of the “vulnerabilities” felt by respondents in the CEE case in relation to the EU’s alleged favoring of minorities may indeed be tied to the feeling that painful historical episodes are being replayed thanks to certain EU policies in the minority realm.

Also, it is worth noting that across all the four national contexts, culturally or ethnically related groups (like Armenians in Bulgaria or Germans in the Netherlands) did not factor into the equation when it came to discussions of “minority empowerment”, which is generally in accordance with ethnic threat studies.

What is evident is that the EU remains important for understanding majority-minority relations and populists are attentive to its potential to provide moral guidance pertaining to the development of more equitable intra-societal relations that guard against ethnocracy

¹²⁷¹ Judt, Tony. *The Past is Another Country: Myth and Memory in Postwar Europe* (1992), pp. 99-100.

practices. At the same time, even extremely Eurosceptic parties like the PVV clearly do not feel a need to scapegoat minorities or invent claims against them in order to score points against the EU project. In addition, popular level sentiments about minorities and the EU impacts do not necessarily translate into similar views among populists and it would be fallacious to attempt to draw quick conclusions regarding the degree of alignment between the viewpoints of nationalistically inclined citizens and nationalist politicians. Still, while this disconnect seems to hold true when one takes into account the deliberations on minority issues in the Netherlands, this does not seem to be the case in CEE countries like Romania and Bulgaria. Also, as stipulated in Chapter Three and the concluding section of this one, nationalist-populist politicians' views on multiculturalism and the role of the EU in its promotion in the Netherlands and Germany appear to largely overlap with those of ordinary citizens who profess right-wing beliefs.

Chapter Seven: General Conclusion

This thesis has mainly focused on the power of perceptions, striving to uncover how the EU's transformations of the political and cultural space within nation-states are evaluated on the level of nationalist-populist parties. It utilized "Europeanization" as an umbrella term for the European Union's substantive and normative influences on countries and it is these influences which were investigated. (The actual motivations of EU actors and their rationale for adopting certain policies are beyond the scope of the thesis). Interviewing nationalist-populist figures and engaging in document analysis resulted in a variety of very context-specific revelations, which could be properly understood only by taking into account the specific political situations in the different nation-states and the EU impacts on particular realms.

The following conclusion will attempt to tie together the variety of thematic strands followed throughout the thesis and returns to the original question – the nature of the Europeanization-related divergences between parties in the East and parties in the West. In this regard, the first part of the conclusion will put the hypotheses introduced in Chapter 2 (which probe the differences between Eastern and Western Europe) to the test in light of the nature of the findings. The second part will reiterate how some of the insights discovered are rather novel and enrich the knowledge and understanding of Europeanization within a number of scholarly disciplines. Lastly, the final part provides some suggestions regarding the follow-up research other scholars could undertake – both in relation to specific parties and to nation-states as a whole.

1. Comparisons between the complaints of Eastern and Western nationalist-populists

This thesis has covered a multitude of different domains pertinent to Euroscepticism and analyzed the attitudes of nationalist-populist parties in four countries, attempting to remain attentive to local peculiarities. Nonetheless, despite the four parties' very divergent attitudes towards Europeanization, Chapters 4-6 also identified some points of similarity between Bulgarian and Romanian populists on the one hand, and Dutch and Germans on the other. The first part of this concluding chapter summarizes the points of comparison already identified, and explores the implications of the East-West divides.

The hypotheses set out in Chapter 2 suggested that:

Hypotheses 1 and 5 (conjoined hypotheses because substantive and normative effects do not always render themselves to clear distinctions from each other): Nationalist-populist members are disillusioned with the EU, as they perceive that it unduly supports minorities through specific legislation, although their Euroscepticism is mostly unconnected to such perceptions; minority groups across both sides of the continent are believed to perceive the EU as an ally and draw on a "normative cushion" from the supranational community.

Hypothesis 2: Minority empowerment in a socio-economic sense or in terms of legislation changes is more likely to be viewed as an EU-related issue on the eastern side of the continent due to the effects of political conditionality and historical understandings of nationalism.

Hypothesis 3: Immigration and citizenship are perceived as being in some respects outside the control of the national government, especially on the Western side of the continent, with the EU conceptualized as an important player in this realm given that EU member-states must abide by rules about mobility of EU citizens.

Hypothesis 4: Pan-Europeanism is unlikely to be regarded as a threat despite the EU's conscious or unconscious efforts in promoting a supranational identity.

It was also hypothesized that (despite the East-West differences anticipated in Hypotheses 2 and 3):

Hypothesis 6: A certain process of convergence is beginning to take place between CEE and Western European parties in relation to the ways in which minority, immigration and citizenship issues are discussed.

To begin the discussion with EU-level effects promoting Pan-Europeanism (H 4): it is clear that this is generally not viewed as posing a direct threat in itself to the continued preference of citizens to identify primarily with their nation-state. This is equally true for Eastern and Western populists.

However, for populists in CEE there is an extra reason not to object to Pan-European agendas. Contrary to what was hypothesized at the end of Chapter Two, what emerges is that even among the CEE populists – as among the rest of the population - the EU appears to have largely succeeded in appropriating Europe as a political space. Thus, CEE nationalists regard it as exceedingly difficult to reject the EU as a whole without simultaneously being forced into the trap of admitting that they oppose their country's reclamation of its rightful place

within the confines of the European family. Indeed, the acceptance of an overarching EU identity is further manifested in the tendency of CEE populists to support the EU over the United States on a symbolic level or as a matter of principle. Of course such views may also be reflective of the conspiratorial and anti-globalization thinking that is a notable feature of such populisms, with the USA (deemed to be the “major promoter of globalist ideology”) likely to be viewed as an entity aspiring to control the “junior partner” – the EU.

In contrast, among Western European populists, Europe (and by extension EU membership) is far from needed as a locus of identity in order to help them make a proper statement regarding their brand of domestic nationalism. Pan-Europeanism at the EU level is thus largely an inconvenience that only distracts from other pursuits and is associated with the EU’s alleged proclivity to dictate the nature of the interactions among its constituent countries. Chapter One suggested that the EU institutional environment might even promote a sense of pan-European identity among nationalist-populists, but the thesis did not find that the EU provided nationalist-populist members with significant networking opportunities and right-wing cooperation has remained relatively limited, as evidenced by the short lifespan of the ITS group in the European Parliament or the Dutch populists’ tendency to perceive cooperation with Eastern European members as self-defeating with regard to their underlying ideological aims.

At the same time, and partly in line with Hypothesis 4, Pan-Europeanism remains a contested term that invokes negative images in the minds of CEE populists due to its continued association with double standards in favor of the more developed West attributable to the perceived lack of equality of treatment by the EU core (see below, with regard to minority rights). The attitudes of Western European populists, by contrast, reflect

defensiveness because of the EU's presumed tendency to overdo itself in accommodating the Easterners by either making them the "international faces of the supranational community" as a result of being too generous in including them in all its supranational activities, or refusing to hold them to the same standard as the affluent West in the economic realm.

As for immigration and emigration (H 3), the former has retained its hold on public consciousness in Western Europe and remains the issue area that is the most likely to be blamed on "Europeanization" by Western populists. Startin and Krouwel opine that anti-EU stances among far right leaders are frequently attributable to strategic reasons – they are often a camouflage or a proxy for anti-immigration sentiments (being overtly anti-immigrant rather than explicitly anti-EU could decrease electoral support due to the former's associations with racial intolerance and xenophobia on the level of the popular consciousness and reduce the prospects for cooperation with mainstream right parties).¹²⁷² However, as the thesis demonstrated, it is also the case that among the REP and PVV leaders, there is a genuine belief that the EU's actual involvement when it comes to migration matters is especially problematic in comparison to other nationalist domains.

By contrast, the EU's unlocking of emigration waves towards the Western part of the continent continues to be deemed especially worrisome by CEE nationalists. This latter concern is not very apparent from the Western academic literature, but the interviews revealed that – as hypothesized in Chapter Two – emigration does present certain concerns to populists in CEE. Included among them are the trepidations that lands left vacant by émigrés will be settled by "ethnic others" from within and outside the EU, the belief that post-2007 the economic contributions (i.e. in terms of remittances) of expatriate Bulgarians and

Romanians to their mother country's GDP are marginal, as well as some measure of conspiratorial thinking which suggests that Western countries are not interested in narrowing the economic gap with the East and are keen to encourage the educated Easterners to forego their original identity and join their ranks.

It is not very likely that a swap between the East and West (with regard to the importance placed on these issue areas) will occur any time soon, though some PVV members increasingly imply that Europe (in large part because of the supposed failed policies of the EU and the national governments of the various states) will in the next decades become a continent of emigration. It is also conceivable that immigration and asylum issues will start occupying the spotlight among CEE populists if their countries receive significantly greater numbers of refugees from conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa - conflicts which populists may blame the EU for stoking or at least failing to resolve.

One stark contrast between CEE and Western European populists is to be found in their inclination to engage in the "Europeanizing" of minority rights issues. This was to be expected and Hypothesis 2 suggested that the reasons could be the greater prevalence of ethnic nationalism in CEE, as well as the tendency of Western populists to be less concerned about settled ethnic minorities because they were more worried about immigration. In accordance with expectations, in the case of Ataka and the PRM, minority-majority relations tend to be viewed in antagonistic or essentialist terms, with the EU generally conceptualized as a clear ally of the "minority underdog". This understanding is also tied to the tendency attributed to the EU to present Eastern European nationalisms as inherently less legitimate than Western European ones.

A more nuanced picture is presented in the Western case, to a degree in contrast to the expectations laid out in Hypotheses 1 and 5. The rigidity of the minority-majority category

¹²⁷² Startin, Nick and André Krouwel. *Euroskepticism Re-galvanized: The Consequences of the 2005 French and*

boundaries is less frequently emphasized among Western populists (with regard to ethnic minority communities in Germany and the Netherlands), which is in accordance with the initial predictions, but the EU effects are sometimes also regarded as so very detrimental to the population as a whole, that the hardships that they allegedly create are seen to affect majorities and minorities alike. One indication of the greater defensiveness accompanying discussions of minority issues in Eastern Europe is perhaps the determination (common among both Ataka and PRM members) to prove that the minority situation in their countries is objectively better than in most other European or non-European states; in contrast, Western European populists appear to be less interested in comparing their minority situations to the “EU mean” or are more likely to downplay the salience of EU officials’ rhetoric touching upon minority rights. In essence, the PVV’s stances on the matter represent added proof that “hard” Eurosceptics may regard the generic EU influences on the nation-state as extremely damaging, to the extent that they eclipse any concerns pertaining to the changing power relations between majorities and minorities (as discussed in Chapter Three).

It is also notable that the degree to which a party proclaims itself to be “Eurosceptic” does not necessarily translate into a tendency to view all the “principal nationalist domains” as having become “highly Europeanized” under the influences of the EU.

For instance, in the case of the PVV, neither Pan-Europeanism (which is not perceived as being anywhere close to outstripping Dutch loyalty to their nation-state in the hierarchy of collective identities) nor EU-induced “minority empowerment” - which could engender feelings of relative deprivation on the part of members of the majority and negatively affect their perceptions of their own nation-state - register as especially alarming.

In contrast, the PRM is keen to highlight how what they see as “German Europe” is interfering with Romanian attachments to “Latin identity” and views the EU-attributable “minority empowerment” in relation to Hungarians as quite significant, but is nonetheless not as eager to embrace the “Eurosceptic” label as its counterpart in the Netherlands, with a few members like Țîrnea even describing themselves as positively excited regarding the EU. Thus, it is fair to make the assumption that the “hardness” or “softness” of party Euroscepticism does not correlate neatly with the extent to which the EU is deemed to have made problematic inroads into “core nationalist domains”.

Hypothesis 6 suggested that there is likely to be a convergence of concerns between Eastern and Western European parties in relation to the non-economic facets of Euroscepticism. While the extent to which this is true is difficult to measure through qualitative means, it is evident that the nature of the discourses of Eastern and Western populists is still manifestly different. Three indicators of that are their different receptivity to future enlargements (for instance, CEE populists are more supportive of upcoming enlargements despite their reservations regarding the EU’s *modus operandi* and emphasize historical rivalry rather than economic reasons when expressing caution pertaining to the membership prospects of Serbia); the nature of their deliberations with regard to minority issues; and the still strong emigration-immigration divide. In addition, Eastern and Western Eurosceptics are keen to acknowledge that they do not see eye-to-eye with regard to the future direction of EU integration – Eastern European populists are less likely to push for radical restructurings of the EU system given that their countries are likely to end up with an “inferior form of membership” if something along those lines were to be implemented.

2. Contribution to knowledge

In accordance with the cross-disciplinary nature of the research conducted, the thesis managed to offer contributions on a number of different levels.

Firstly, it filled a gap within the scholarship on right-wing political groupings by providing a detailed examination, based largely on qualitative data, of the discourses adopted by four nationalist-populist parties. By considering their statements on minority rights and citizenship it shed light on a number of domains that are of proven relevance for nationalists but are generally regarded as somewhat epiphenomenal by researchers of Euroscepticism or analyzed within a solely domestic framework, without the EU influences necessarily being invoked. The time period (2011-2013) under scrutiny coincided with an economic and cultural solidarity crisis within the European Union, which helped propel EU issues into the spotlight for both nationalist party members and ordinary citizens. The thesis thus adopted the approach (recently popularized by Simon Usherwood) that anti-EU groups do not represent inflexible mavericks that are unlikely to drop their opposition to the Union as a matter of principle, but are actually constructive agents that could be useful in explaining Europeanization-related processes.¹²⁷³

On a theoretical level, the thesis provided further conceptual clarity to the “minority empowerment” phenomenon by analyzing both concrete measures and normative transformations emanating from the EU in relation to the CEE and Western European countries. In the process it highlighted how the term is more likely to be utilized in relation to Eastern Europe. “Minority empowerment” is an umbrella term, but the thesis looked more

¹²⁷³ Usherwood, Simon. *The Shifting Focus of Opposition to the European Union* (2013), p. 291.

closely at the actual types of perceived empowerment which generate nationalist concerns. Drawing on the notion of “minority empowerment”, the thesis not only explored predictable concerns about the EU’s role in enhancing the power of minority Turkish and Hungarian political parties in Bulgaria and Romania, but also managed to uncover a number of salient grievances in relation to the alleged EU impacts on nation-states, grievances that had been missed by researchers focusing on these particular parties. In the case of Ataka and Bulgaria, the thesis highlighted the special salience of the socio-economic dimension of minority empowerment and indicated how it could be an essential trigger for Euroscepticism by connecting it to past insecurities attributable to the country’s forced incorporation into an empire-like entity. By the same token, it also introduced the reader to the paradoxes of the PVV position in relation to minority issues and offered guidance as to the reasons behind its reluctance to view minority empowerment through the EU prism. Briefly, these reasons proved to be a genuine belief that minorities are generally satisfied with the Dutch state’s own conflict-resolution mechanisms, the minorities’ presumed low level of attachment to the EU, the unwillingness to identify majority vs. minority dividends (unlike in the Eastern case) as well as a reluctance to regard them as more threatening than new immigrants from Eastern Europe. Similarly, the thesis drew attention to the divergent discourses within the REP and the legalist reading of “minority empowerment”, while also indicating how the Romanian nationalists’ generally negative self-identification with regard to Hungarians is further amplified due to the actions taken by EU actors in a practical and normative sense. For instance, Hungarian etho-regionalist actors are assumed to garner electoral support due to EU’s alleged inaction on guaranteeing territorial integrity. Also, Hungarians are presumed to be successful as infiltrators of supranational structures, allowing them to dictate the policies of the EU. In that regard, they are thought to be deriving benefits from not being “too Eastern” (more Central European), unlike the Romanians.

The four parties discussed in the thesis are usually labelled as being ‘soft’ Eurosceptic, even if recently the PVV has become ‘harder’. It was therefore possible to explore in some detail what actually constitutes ‘soft’ Euroscepticism. One unexpected finding, with regard to ‘soft’ Euroscepticism and the nationalism of the interviewees, was that objections to Europeanisation often seemed to stem not from concerns about specific nations but rather from a sense that traditional sub-groupings within Europe and international friendships were disrupted by the EU project. In the case of Ataka, these sub-groupings encompass the Slavic countries (especially Russia), while PRM members include Southern European (and sometimes Eastern European) states among them. Transcendent identities are less important from the standpoint of Western European populists, but the PVV position is that Dutch-US bilateral ties could be unduly compromised if the EU continues to expand its competences. As for the REP, the EU is appraised as a culprit in indirectly tarnishing Germany’s reputation among traditionally friendly states like Greece.

In general, the analysis of the attitudes towards the EU exhibited by CEE parties testifies to the reality that hardcore Euroscepticism (implying a total rejection of the European integration project itself and often of the democratic system of governance associated with it) seems to be lacking fertile ground for developing in Eastern Europe – even those party functionaries who are the most adamantly opposed to EU membership imply that the acknowledgement and prestige that accompanies EU accession remains important and provides an essential moral recognition that serves as a counterweight against the often chequered national history of these countries.

With regard to the PVV in particular, by gaining access to a number of prominent, but elusive personalities within the PVV hierarchy, the thesis demonstrated how despite the

recent attempts by Geert Wilders to inspire a broad-based coalition against the EU with the involvement of Western and Southern European nationalist-populist parties (the PVV leader suffered a setback during the summer months of 2013,¹²⁷⁴ but by the end of the year garnered some success in ensuring the tacit commitment of the Front National and other Eurosceptic parties such as the Italian Northern League for an anti-EU alliance in the European Parliament to be officially crafted in the aftermath of the 2014 EP elections),¹²⁷⁵ the underlying ideology of the party is actually premised on a cautious opposition to the deepening of intra-European solidarities.

In relation to the CEE parties, the thesis also showed that nationalists themselves state that in the aftermath of accession the playing field for parties of their ilk has opened up or at least there has been no added impetus for mainstream actors or ordinary citizens to silence discussions of nationalism. Similarly, among the representatives of the Western European parties, the consensus is that the EU actors have generally been unsuccessful in setting the tone for the way in which nationalism-related issues are approached or affected the rules on coalition-making, so as to bring about the isolation of parties that are recognizably nationalist.

Throughout my research the term “Europeanization” generally proved to be a useful shorthand for the description of a variety of (not always interrelated) phenomena due to its multidimensionality and because of enabling me to keep my focus on the EU level as the driver of a variety of policy processes. In addition, the concept reflects the difficulty of disentangling EU-related effects and those that are the outgrowth of “common understandings and conventions” set out by nation-states outside the framework of the EU. One drawback is that while it is not as highly charged a concept as terms like “colonialism”

¹²⁷⁴ Euractiv. Eurosceptics snub Wilders’ attempt to form European far-right party, 28 August 2013.

and “imperialism”, it has a somewhat similar connotation of taking away the prerogatives of a nation-state and allowing the supranational level to reign supreme.

In short, the thesis contributed to the wider literature on Europeanization through both a theoretical and empirical prism. With regard to the former, it provided additional clarity to two specific features of Europeanization - Pan-Europeanism and “minority empowerment” – by illustrating the ways in which they are embedded into the discourses of nationalist-populist parties. In addition, from an empirical standpoint, the thesis presented some specific insights into the workings of four nationalist-populist parties by highlighting the degree to which concrete minority groups (Hungarians, Muslims and so on) and super-order identities (Western, Slavic) fit into the abovementioned theoretical frames. Lastly, during this whole process, the thesis managed to stay faithful to its main research question in terms of providing insights into the different Eastern vs. Western readings of Europeanization on the level of nationalist-populist parties.

3. Suggestions for further research

The thesis touched upon a variety of different dimensions of Euroscepticism and drew comparisons between the substance of the arguments behind the rhetoric employed by members of four different parties operating within the confines of specific national and international contexts. It raised issues related to super order and sub-order identities, ethnicization and patterns of immigration and citizenship transformations within the framework of the EU that could be subjected to further empirical tests by adopting a quantitative approach or expanding the scope of the qualitative framework.

¹²⁷⁵ Euractiv, Le Pen visits Wilders to broker far-right post-EU election deal, 13 November 2013.

Firstly, it would be particularly revealing to conduct a second study on the Ataka party (in the period between 2015 and 2017) that touched upon some of the same topics that I emphasized as part of my research. I managed to interview the Ataka members prior to the most current parliamentary elections (held on 12 May 2013) and it is generally acknowledged by political scientists that in the period between 2011 and May 2013, Ataka (while not able to truly unify the nationalist vote in Bulgaria) was generally somewhat successful in keeping its nationalist credentials intact. However, its decision to implicitly pave the way for the formation of a BSP-led government (which was also backed by the MRF party) by boycotting the parliamentary vote (rather than voting against the socialists) in the aftermath of the elections resulted in serious doubts being raised regarding its “nationalist integrity”¹²⁷⁶ and suspicions were manifested as to the degree to which its previous proclamations regarding its commitment to keep the MRF party from playing a role in the governance of the country were genuine.¹²⁷⁷ Ironically, it also drew the ire of more liberally minded Bulgarian citizens (taking part in protests against the Plamen Oresharski government), who sent out a petition to European Commissioner for Justice, Viviane Reding, (who had already made a statement in support of the Bulgarian opposition),¹²⁷⁸ in which they expressed their concern that an “extreme right-wing anti-European” party is currently at the helm of the country and in a viable position to influence proceedings.¹²⁷⁹ Thus, it could be argued (as also revealed by its slump in ratings since June 2013) that Ataka has been a major casualty of the anti-establishment turn among Bulgarian citizens following the developments of May and June 2013 and has also lost its way with some segments of its traditionally nationalist niche, given

¹²⁷⁶ Stoyanov, Krassimir. *Ляв фашизъм* (Fascism on the left), 23 August 2013.

¹²⁷⁷ Georgiev, Yanko. *От политическо предателство до нападенията над журналисти* (From being a political traitor to attacks on journalists), 14 June 2013.

¹²⁷⁸ *Вивиан Рединг: симпатиите са ми към протестиращите* (Viviane Reding: my sympathies lie with the protesters), 19 July 2013.

that it is no longer conceptualized as being part of the opposition and is criticized for “selling out to the MRF for self-serving reasons”.¹²⁸⁰ In this regard, it is not out of the question that in the near future Ataka may be enticed to start dabbling with “hard Euroscepticism” (it currently tends to sympathize with the viewpoint that the Europe flag waving protesters have been brainwashed by “globalist agents” like George Soros)¹²⁸¹ in an attempt to recover its reputation with nationalists or alternatively try to rebrand itself as a respectable party that no longer envisions itself as Eurosceptic. Consequently, probing Ataka’s views on issues like Pan-Europeanism and EU influence on the prospects of minorities in Bulgaria in two or three years’ time could constitute a worthwhile endeavor and provide important insights pertaining to the nature of Ataka’s evolution as a political party.

In a general sense, the thesis opens up another new avenue for further research when it comes to Euroscepticism in the four countries that were the focus of my analyses. Given that I looked at particular issue areas that are relevant to Euroscepticism from the standpoint of parties that are not firmly nested within the mainstream of the selected countries’ political system, it may be tempting to undertake comparative studies between mainstream conservative parties in the Netherlands and Germany (which are increasingly incorporating facets of Euroscepticism into their official rhetoric) focusing on the degree to which the perceived EU structuring of the relationship between Pan-Europeanism and national identity as well as majority and minority relations are viewed as problematic by them.

¹²⁷⁹ *Граждани до Вивиан Рединг: Още Европа? Да, моля!* (From the citizens to Viviane Reding: More Europe? Yes, please!), 22 July 2013.

¹²⁸⁰ Paunova, Polina. *За да се спаси от оставка и избори, БСП капитулира пред "Атака"* (BSP bows down to Ataka in order to stave off threat of resignation and new elections), 26 June 2013.

¹²⁸¹ Granitski, Ivan. *Соросидите зомбираха националното съзнание* (The ‘Sorosoids’ have zombified our national consciousness), 13 September 2013.

In addition, extensive studies that touch upon Eastern European mainstream conservative parties could also be conducted, as such research endeavors will provide fresh insights on whether the gulf in opinions between mainstream and radical right (when evaluating Europeanization-related dynamics) is more pronounced in CEE or Western European countries. The consensus in the scholarship generally holds that CEE centre-right parties that are considered to be fully within the political mainstream are somewhat more likely to experiment with “quasi right-wing” rhetoric and venture into the radical right realm while discussing nationalism-related issues than their counterparts in Western European states, who tend to be more inhibited and are conscious of the risks inherent in eroding the line of separation with fascist-like entities. One additional reason for that is tied to the presence of well-organized and politically active minorities within a country without a long tradition of independent statehood (a phenomenon more common to Eastern Europe), which is thought to have eroded the legitimacy of “moderate nationalists” – a nationalist who is overly accommodating to ethnic minorities is essentially seen as an oxymoron.¹²⁸² For instance, the centre-right CEDB that was the governing party in Bulgaria between 2009 and 2013 has not been shy in engaging in bombastically nationalist discourses and has on occasions crossed over into the Ataka-like turf, as evidenced by a number of controversies involving the party leader, Boyko Borisov, who in 2009 in a speech delivered to Bulgarian expatriates in the United States referred to Roma and Turks as “bad human material”.¹²⁸³ The “mainstreaming of right-wing discourses” has of course not been absent in Western European countries, with some semblances of this phenomenon occurring among conservative parties in France and the United Kingdom, to take two examples, particularly in relation to immigration-related issues.

¹²⁸² Kopecký, Petr. *Parliaments in the Czech and Slovak Republics – Party Competition and Parliamentary Institutionalization* (2001), p. 237. (also cited in Dandolov, Philip. *Nationalist-populist parties and the EU: attitudes and their determinants* (pragmatic and/or ideological), 2010).

Furthermore, taking into account the nature of the party profiles of the two CEE parties that were examined, future researchers may be well-served by employing a similar methodology to the one that I adopted and look into the nature of the discourses of the nationalist Slovakian L'S-HZDS party pertaining to the various manifestations of Europeanization. Slovakia is a country in which majority-minority rivalries constitute an important part of the political landscape (specifically the dynamics of the Slovakian-Hungarian relationship dyad)¹²⁸⁴ and fears that the Southern region (where Hungarians are concentrated) could be susceptible to secessionism pressures from the Hungarian state remain vivid.¹²⁸⁵

Lastly, in light of the future potentialities of EU accession (Macedonia submitted a membership application in 2004 and is currently among the five candidate countries), Macedonian populists could constitute a worthwhile object of study. Ultranationalist Macedonian political parties (like TMORO-VEP) tend to be opposed to the EU membership of the country, while Albanian nationalist parties (in part due to the perceived favorable treatment of the Kosovo issue by the EU as evidenced by the 8 July 2010 resolution by the European Parliament encouraging other states to recognize Kosovo)¹²⁸⁶ are in general likely to welcome the Republic of Macedonia's incorporation into the supranational community.¹²⁸⁷ Inter-ethnic relations in the Republic of Macedonia (especially between the ethnic Macedonians and the Albanian-Macedonians which constitute roughly a quarter of the country's population) remain strained and radicals on both sides have on past occasions

¹²⁸³ *Telegraph newspaper*. Mayor of Sofia brands Roma, Turks and retirees 'bad human material', 6 February 2009.

¹²⁸⁴ Harris, Erika. *Management of the Hungarian Issue in Slovak Politics: Europeanization and the Evolution of National Identities* (2004), pp. 7-8.

¹²⁸⁵ Pytlaš, Bartek. *The Radical Right Game of Cards – Historical Legacies and Ideological Interdependence of Radical Right Parties in Slovakia and Hungary* (2010), p. 12.

¹²⁸⁶ European Parliament resolution of 8 July 2010 on the European integration process of Kosovo (2010).

¹²⁸⁷ Saveski, Zdravko and Artan Sadiku. *The Radical Right in Macedonia* (2012), pp. I, 1-2.

proven more than capable of fomenting violent unrest between both communities. Thus, applying the “minority empowerment” framework to the Macedonian situation and obtaining information regarding the Macedonian nationalists’ expectations for the ways in which the inter-ethnic situation will play out in the aftermath of accession could set the stage for a powerful academic study.

Appendix 1

List of Interview Questions (English)

General Cluster

- What are your views on your country's membership of the EU, is it beneficial or rather to the detriment of your state?
- Which aspect of the EU would you regard as representing a main area of concern when it comes to your nation-state?

Cluster 1 (EU identity)

- How are you disposed toward EU initiatives that aim to crystallize and strengthen the expression of a EU cultural or political identity (Pan-European nationalism)?
- To what extent do you regard dual attachments to the nation and Europe (or the EU as an entity) as problematic?
- Do you see the EU as providing a check on the geopolitical aspirations of the United States and if yes, would you characterize it as a desirable development?
- Do you feel that the EU has brought about a strengthening of your state's international bargaining position/increased its influence in the world/improved its international reputation?
- How are you disposed towards the potential EU membership of Turkey?

Cluster 2 (Perceived Minority Empowerment)

- How do you see the current status of ethnic and/or cultural minorities within your country?

- From the perspective of your nation-state, do you think that the EU has altered the status quo in the case of your core group and minority groups? (has it brought about a worsening or improvement in relations between them, has it strengthened or weakened the allegiance to the state felt by minority groups, and so on)
- Do minority groups benefit more from EU membership compared to the majority population?
- Do you feel that the EU has strengthened or weakened the territorial integrity of your nation-state?
- How do you view the Kosovo developments in relation to the future activism of the minority groups within your state? The EU as a whole has refrained from adopting a clearcut position regarding Kosovo's status, but do you think that it should have handled matters differently? (mainly relevant in the case of the CEE states).

Cluster 3 (Europeanization of Migration, Citizenship, Normative Aspects)

- How are you disposed toward EU level initiatives (i.e. those with an emphasis on burden-sharing) that touch upon migration?
- To what extent do you tend to associate discourses promoting multiculturalism with the influence of the EU (as opposed to that of your national government)?
- Do you regard the more permissive citizenship regimes that are in part induced by Europeanization as likely to make your country a more attractive destination for immigrants in the future?
- Do you see any major benefits or costs to the EU regional policies from the standpoint of your nation-state?

Cluster 4 (Procedural Aspects)

- Do you feel unwelcome or intimidated about expressing your nationalist views during discussions in EU and other transnational fora?

- In the pre-accession phase, did you experience unusual difficulties in terms of finding coalition partners on the domestic scene due to your views regarding EU integration? (only applicable to the CEE states)

List of Interview Questions (German)

Allgemeine Fragen

- Was sind Ihre Ansichten über die EU-Mitgliedschaft Ihres Landes?
- Welcher Aspekt oder Aspekte der EU betrachten Sie als äußerst oder besonders problematisch?

Teil 1 (EU Identität)

- Was ist Ihre Meinung bezüglich der verschiedenen kulturellen Massnahmen, die für die Stärkung der EU-Identität geeignet sind?
- Wie verstehen Sie das Phänomen des Pan-europäischen Nationalismus? Glauben Sie, dass die Stärkung der EU-Identität zu doppelten Loyalitäten führen wird und potenziell eine negative Auswirkung auf den Patriotismus der deutschen Bürger haben kann?
- Kann die Europäische Militärmacht als Gegengewicht zu den Vereinigten Staaten wirken und wäre das eine wünschenswerte Entwicklung von der Perspektive Deutschlands? Im Allgemeinen sind die deutschen politischen Prioritäten auf internationaler Ebene im Einklang mit denen der EU oder mit denen der Vereinigten Staaten?
- Hat die EU Mitgliedschaft zur Stärkung der internationalen Verhandlungsposition Deutschlands beigetragen? Im Allgemeinen sind deutsche nationale Interessen im Rahmen der Europäischen Union gut vertreten oder ist es besonders schwer deutsche nationale Interessen in der EU durchzusetzen?
- Was ist Ihre Meinung bezüglich der zukünftigen EU-Mitgliedschaft der Türkei?

Teil 2 (Minderheiten und die EU)

- Wie beurteilen Sie den heutigen Stand der Beziehungen zwischen Mehrheitsgruppen (Deutsche) und ethnischen und kulturellen Minderheitsgruppen (z.B. Muslime und Osteuropäer)? Sind Sie harmonisch oder nicht sehr harmonisch? Gibt es Bereiche, wo es "positive Diskriminierung" existiert?

- Wie verstehen Sie die Rolle der Europäischen Union? Ist es richtig zu sagen, dass die EU-Mitgliedschaft (besonders seit Anfang der neunziger Jahre, nach dem Vertrag von Maastricht) zu einer Ermächtigung der Minderheiten und Benachteiligung von Deutschen (z.B. in Bezug auf verschiedene Rechte) beigetragen hat?
- Wie beurteilen Sie die Position der EU in Bezug auf die Kosovo-Frage?

Teil 3 (Europäisierung von Migration, Staatsbürgerschaft, normativen Aspekten)

- Wie betrachten Sie deutsche Migrationspolitik und die Prozesse der Europäisierung des Politikfeldes?
- Assoziieren Sie die Förderung von Multikulturalismus in Deutschland mit den Einflüssen der EU oder mit denen der nationalen Regierung?
- Wie schätzen sie die normative Wirkung der EU auf die deutsche Medien und Ausbildung ein?
- Inwieweit hat Europäisierung die Basis für eine Änderung der Einbürgerungsprozeduren geschaffen?
- Die Regionalpolitik der Europäischen Union verfolgt das Ziel den wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Zusammenhalt innerhalb der Europäischen Union zu stärken. Haben Bundesländer wie Bayern davon profitiert oder ist es der Fall, dass die Auswirkungen der EU bezüglich der Regionalpolitik eher negativ sind?

Teil 4 (Prozedurische Aspekte)

- Gibt es besondere Vorurteile/sollen Sie mit Vorurteilen gegenüber nationalistischen Parteien rechnen während Diskussionen auf der EU-Ebene?
- Glauben Sie, dass die EU die interne Koalitionspolitik in Deutschland zu beeinflussen versucht und nationalistische Parteien oder Fraktionen bewusst isoliert?

List of interview questions (Bulgarian)

Общи въпроси

- Смятате ли, че членството на България в Европейския съюз е по-скоро положително или по-скоро отрицателно от гледна точка на българските национални интереси?
- Кой аспект на българското членство в Евросъюза е от ваша гледна точка в най-голям ущърб на българските национални интереси?
- Смятате ли, че (като цяло) България е третирана като пълноправен член на ЕС от останалите държави, които са част от общността?

Клъстер 1 (Европейска идентичност)

- Какво е вашето мнение по отношение на евроинициативите, които целят да засилят Пан-европеизма?
- Заплаха ли е за България Пан-европеизмът от гледна точка на рисковете за създаване на двойствена лоялност и свеждане до минимум на привързаността към националната идея?
- Смятате ли, че за България е по-добре ЕС да е достатъчно силен, за да е в състояние да бъде коректив на САЩ? Предпочитате ли САЩ да останат по-влиятелни от ЕС в глобален план?
- Какво е Вашата гледна точка по отношение на евентуалното присъединяване на Турция към ЕС?

Клъстер 2 (ЕС и малцинствата)

- Какво мислите за сегашната ситуация на малцинствата в България? Може ли да се говори за тяхна привилегированост спрямо българите?

- Смятате ли, че от 2007-ма насам има някакво засилване на влиянието на малцинствата в България?

Може ли да се твърди, че са по-склонни да потъпкват определени български норми? Извличат ли повече дивиденди от ЕС на фона на българите?

- Има ли основание да се твърди, че членството в ЕС е допълнителна гаранция за запазването на териториалната цялост на България?

- Каква е вашата гледна точка във връзка с казуса Косово и позицията на ЕС? Изпитвате ли чувство на солидарност с други източноевропейски страни като Сърбия по отношение на сходни вътрешни конфликти?

Клъстер 3 (Имиграция, граждански процедури, нормативни аспекти)

- Как оценявате влиянието на ЕС върху мерките, които се взимат по отношение на миграцията към България?

- Считате ли, че западни модели на мултикултурното общество скоро ще бъдат приложени и в България и каква роля би изиграл Евросъюзът що се отнася до едно подобно стечение?

- Смятате ли, че медиите в България обикновено предоставят обективни анализи по отношение на Евросъюза?

- По ваше мнение как влияе членството в ЕС върху процедурите за издаване на българско гражданство?

- Как оценявате влиянието на ЕС върху политиката на регионално развитие в България?

- Имате ли причини да смятате, че влиянието на България в глобален план и престижът и ще нараснат покрай членството и в ЕС?

Клъстер 4 (Процедурни аспекти)

- Смятате ли, че националистите се третират некоректно при разисквания в Европейския парламент и различните транснационални форуми към евроструктурите?

- Мислите ли, че ЕС влияе върху коалиционните параметри в България и окуражава леви, центристски и умереносредни партии в България да изолират националистите?

List of Interview Questions (Romanian)

Intrebări generale

- Care este parerea ta în legatură cu intrarea României în Uniunea Europeană? A avut un efect pozitiv sau negativ asupra țării?
- Care aspect al Uniunii Europene crezi că pune probleme țării tale?

Partea întâi (Identitatea UE)

- Crezi că Uniunea Europeană promovează pan-europenismul ?
- Crezi că acest lucru este o amenințare la adresa identității naționale în România?
- Ai prefera să ai o Uniune Europeană puternică sau ai prefera că o țară ca Statele Unite puternică?
- Ai prefera ca UE să fie mai puternică ca și actor global decât Statele Unite?
- Nu mai suport intrarea Turciei în Uniunea Europeană?

Partea a doua (Uniunea Europeană și minoritățile)

- Care crezi că e situația actuală a minorităților la tine în țară?
- Consideri că UE a influențat anumite minorități să devină mai vocale și mai puternice împotriva majorității din România?

- Crezi ca minoritățile beneficiază mai mult in UE decat populatia majoritară a unei țări membre?
- Cum vezi situația din Kosovo și poziția UE in legatura cu aceasta situație?

Partea a treia (Imigrație, aspecte normative, cetățenie)

- Ce parere ai in legatura cu influența UE asupra imigrării in România?
- Consideri ca UE ajuta sau dăunează integritatea teritoriala a României?
- In ce măsură asociezi discursurile care promoveaza multiculturalismul cu influența UE?
- Crezi ca UE influențează presa din România?
- Consideri ca politicile permissive in legătură cu acordarea cetățeniei (politici influențate de UE) vor avea ca efect cresterea imigranților ce vor veni in România in viitor?

Partea a patra (Aspectelor procedurale)

- Cum crezi ca politicile de dezvoltare regional din UE afectează România?
- Consideri ca Uniunea Europeană izolează partide naționaliste?

Appendix 2

Main Facts and Characteristics of the Parties

Политическа партия “Атака” (Ataka political party)

Party leader, founder and chairman: Volen Siderov (b. 1956)

Alternative names: Also known as *Национален съюз “Атака”* (National Union “Attack”) during its first participation in domestic parliamentary elections in 2005.

Media associated with the party: Skat TV (based in Bourgas) until 2009, when Skat’s founder Valeri Simeonov has formed an alternative party with a similarly nationalist orientation – National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria; Alfa TV (based in Sofia) since 2011. This is the first political party in Bulgaria with its own television channel. The official newspaper *Ataka* has been in circulation since the 17th of October 2005.

Established: 17 April 2005 (officially registered with the courts in July 2005).

Meaning of Name and Symbolism: The name “Ataka” (literally “attack”) encapsulates the national assertiveness subscribed to by the party and the need for past Bulgarian glories to be recaptured. Specific letters like “A” are associated with Bulgarian Christian symbolism (the party is strongly pro-Christian in its orientation) and are believed to represent new beginnings as well as spiritual rejuvenation. A Christian cross is also part of the logo of the party. It has been suggested that the name “Ataka” mirrors that of a newspaper in Bulgaria with pro-Nazi leanings that began circulation on 25 May 1932,¹²⁸⁸ but this is far from universally acknowledged. The “Ataka” programme on Skat TV (hosted by Siderov) preceded the establishment of the party.

¹²⁸⁸ Lilov, Grigor. *Най-богатите българи – Политиците Парите! Мръсните тайни!* (*The richest Bulgarians – the politicians, their wealth and the dirty secrets*) (2013), p. 319.

Party membership: 5500-6000 members at the time of registration; no official information released, but current estimates suggest figures around 5000 with a downward trend in membership.

Sources:

Andonova, Zdravka and Lidiya Tsacheva, trud newspaper. *350 000 българи в партията* (350 000 Bulgarians are registered as party members), 12 November 2012. <<http://www.trud.bg/Article.asp?ArticleId=1632304>>, Retrieved 29 April 2013.

Lilov, Grigor. *Най-богатите българи – Политиците Парите! Мръсните тайни!* (*The richest Bulgarians – the politicians, their wealth and the dirty secrets*), 2013. Retrieved June 2014.

Ninova, Maria. *Година преди изборите – нови партии никнат като гъби* (One year prior to the elections, many new parties emerge out of the blue), 21 September 2012. <<http://duma.bg/node/39631>>

Performance in elections for the Bulgarian National Assembly

Election Years	# of total votes	% of overall vote	# of seats won	Rank
2005	296 848	8.93	21 (out of 240)	4th
2009	395 733	9.36	21 (out of 240)	4th
2013	258 481	7.30	23 (out of 240)	4th

Sources:

2005 Parliamentary elections in Bulgaria, official directory. <<http://pi2005.cik.bg/results/>>

2009 Parliamentary elections in Bulgaria, official directory.

<http://pi2009.cik.bg/results/proportional/rik_00.html> <http://pi2009.cik.bg/results/mandates/rik_00.html>

2013 Parliamentary elections in Bulgaria, official directory.

<<http://results.cik.bg/pi2013/rezultati/index.html>>

Performance in Presidential elections (Volen Siderov, with Pavel Shopov as vice-presidential candidate on both occasions)

Election Years	# of total votes (1st round)	% of popular vote (1st round)	rank (1st round)	# of total votes (2nd round)	% of popular vote (2nd round)	Rank (2nd round)
2006	597 175	21.49	2nd	649 387	24.05	2nd
2011	122 466	3.64	4th	-	-	-

Sources:

Official website of the 2006 Bulgarian presidential elections. <http://pvr2006.cik.bg/results_1/index.html,
http://pvr2006.cik.bg/results_2/index.html>

Official website of the 2011 Bulgarian presidential elections.
 <<http://results.cik.bg/tur1/prezidentski/index.html>>

Performance in elections for the European Parliament

Election Years	# of overall votes	% of overall vote	# of overall seats won	Rank
2007 (by- election)	275 237	14. 20	3 (out of 18)	4th
2009	308 052	11. 96	2 (out of 18)	4th
2014	66 210	2.96	0 (out of 17)	8th

On the European level, Ataka used to have close links with the PRM, currently there is sustained cooperation with the Freedom Party in Austria and the *Front National*.

Sources:

2007 European Parliament elections in Bulgaria, official directory (CIK). <<http://ep2007.cik.bg/results/>>

2009 European Parliament elections in Bulgaria, official directory (CIK). <<http://ep2009.cik.bg/results/>>

2014 European Parliament elections in Bulgaria, official directory (CIK).

<<http://results.cik.bg/ep2014/rezultati>>

The Ataka party EP parliamentarians used to be a member of the far right Identity, Tradition and Sovereignty (ITS) Group within the European Parliament between January 2007 and November 2007, when it was dissolved.

Additional sources consulted:

Ataka official website. *Символи на партия Атака* (Symbols of the Ataka party).

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Blagov, Krum. *Името “Атака” е взето от Гьобелс* (The name “Ataka” has been borrowed from Goebbels),

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Retrieved 1 April 2013.

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<<http://dariknews.bg/izbori2013t.php?itid=20&pcid=1>>, Retrieved 3 April 2013.

Dnevnik bg. *СКАТ - телевизията със собствени избиратели* (Skat – the TV with its own voters), 8 November 2011, Retrieved 24 May 2013.

Nikolova, Tanya. *Речник на политическите партии в България 1989-2009. Хроника на събитията* (A dictionary of political parties in Bulgaria 1989-2009: A Recount of the events), p. 240, 2012.

Skandalno.net. *Капка и Димитър Стоянов патентоват марката “Партия Атака”*. (Kapka Siderova and Dimitar Stoyanov will try to patent the name “Ataka”), 12 December 2011. (Retrieved 29 March 2013).

Vsekiden newspaper. *Строй се, преброй се* (Let’s count ourselves), 30 April 2009.

<http://www.vsekiden.com/50200/%D1%81%D1%82%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B9-%D1%81%D0%B5-%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B1%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B9-%D1%81%D0%B5/>>, Retrieved 4 April 2013.

Partidul România Mare (Greater Romania Party)

Party leader and chairman: Gheorghe Funar (b. 1949) (since 27 July 2013), previously Corneliu Vadim Tudor (b. 1949)

Founding members: Corneliu Vadim Tudor, Eugen Barbu, Mircea Musat, Alexandru Munteanu, Theodor Paraschiv

Party newspaper (since 1991): *Ziarul Tricolorul*

Established (and officially registered with the courts): 20 June 1991

Meaning of Name: The name of the party testifies to its nationalist orientation and the desire to see the clock turn back to the status quo between 1918 and 1940 when Romania reached its greatest territorial expansion and saw all the territories with an ethnic Romanian majority become part of one state. The party members regard the Moldovans as a subset of the Romanian ethnicity.

Party membership (estimate 2011): 84, 000

Performance in elections for the Romanian Chamber of Deputies

Election Years	# of total votes	% of overall vote	# of overall seats won	Rank
1992	424 061	3.89	16 (out of 341)	6th
1996	546 430	4.46	19 (out of 343)	5th
2000	2 112 027	19.48	84 (out of 345)	2nd
2004	1 302 724	12.93	48 (out of 332)	3rd
2008	217 595	3.15	0 (out of 333)	5th
2012	92 382	1.24	0 (out of 412)	5th

Performance in elections for the Romanian Senate

Election Years	# of total votes	% of overall vote	# of overall seats won	Rank
1992	422 545	3.85	6 (out of 143)	6th
1996	558 026	4.54	8 (out of 143)	5th
2000	2 288 483	21.01	37 (out of 140)	2nd
2004	1 379 789	13.63	21 (out of 137)	3rd
2008	245 930	3.57	0 (out of 137)	5th
2012	109 142	1.47	0 (out of 176)	5th

Sources:

Essex UK, Election Results Romania, 1992-2000.

<<http://www2.essex.ac.uk/elect/database/indexCountry.asp?country=ROMANIA&opt=elc>>

Biroul Electoral Central (Main Election Bureau). *Alegeri pentru Camera Deputatilor si Senat, 30 noiembrie 2008* (Elections for the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate), 30 November 2008.

<<http://www.becparlamentare2008.ro/rezul/anexa8abun.pdf>>

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Biroul Electoral Central (Main Election Bureau). *Alegeri pentru Camera Deputatilor si Senat, 11 decembrie 2012* (Elections for the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, 11 December 2012).

<<http://www.becparlamentare2012.ro/A-DOCUMENTE/Rezultate%20partiale/Rezultate%20provizorii.pdf>>

Performance in Presidential elections (Corneliu Vadim Tudor)

Election Years	# of total votes (1st round)	% of popular vote (1st round)	rank (1st round)	# of total votes (2nd round)	% of popular vote (2nd round)	rank (2nd round)
1996	597 508	4.72	5	-	-	-
2000	3 178 293	28.34	2	3 324 247	33.17	2
2004	1 313 714	12.57	3	-	-	-
2009	540 380	5.56	4	-	-	-

Sources:

Statistica Electorală 1992-2004. (Romanian Election Statistics Database, 1992-2004).

http://www.insse.ro/cms/rw/resource/stat_electorale.pdf?view=true

Biroul Electoral Central – Rezultate 2009. (Main Election Bureau – 2009 Results).

http://www.bec2009p.ro/Documente%20PDF/Rezultate/Rezultate%20finale%20turul%20I/P_BEC.pdf

Performance in elections for the European Parliament

Election Years	# of overall votes	% of overall vote	# of overall seats won	Rank
2007 (by-election)	212 596	4.15	0 (out of 35)	7th
2009	419 094	8.65	3 (out of 33)	4 th (shared with DUHR)
2014	150 484	2.70	0 (out of 32)	8th

Sources:

Gagatek, Wojciech. The 2009 Elections to the European Parliament. Country Reports, European University Institute, 2010.

<http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/13757/EUDO_2009-EP-Elections_CountryReports.pdf;jsessionid=2BA0AD64965C8210FE51AC418D3405DF?sequence=1>

Biroul Electoral Central (Central Election Bureau). *Rezultate finale - situația voturilor valabil exprimate*

(Final results of the vote for European Parliament held on 25 May 2014)

<<http://www.bec2014.ro/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Situatia-voturilor-valabil-exprimate.pdf>>

5 members of the PRM served as observers and after their country joined the EU, they acquired the status of full MEPs until the 2007 election. The PRM party EP parliamentarians used to be a member of the far right Identity, Tradition and Sovereignty (ITS) Group within the European Parliament between January 2007 and November 2007, when it was dissolved.

Additional sources consulted:

Greater Romania party official website. *Istoric* (History). <<http://prm-central.ro/istoric/>> Retrieved 30 March 2013.

Greater Romania Party official website (Cluj). <<http://www.prmcluj.ro/despre-noi/>>, Retrieved 10 April 2013.

Machiavelli, Romanian Portal on Political Parties. Partidul România Mare profile.

<<http://www.machiavelli.ro/partide.php>>, Retrieved 30 March 2013.

Ziare.com. *Despre PRM* (About the PRM party). <<http://www.ziare.com/prm/biografie>>, Retrieved 9 April 2013.

Partij voor de Vrijheid (Party for Freedom)

Party leader and chairman: Geert Wilders (b. 1963)

Founding members: Geert Wilders, Martin Bosma

Established (and officially registered): 22 February 2006 (the Wilders Group was formed on 24 November 2004)

Meaning of Name: The name chosen by the party likely stems from the commitment expressed by its leader to tackle perceived authoritarian tendencies in Dutch politics through a strong emphasis on freedom of speech and opposition to the excesses of Islamization. Wilders is seen to have been particularly affected by the murders of freedom of speech advocates Pim Fortuyn (2002) and Theo van Gogh (2004), the latter event sometimes regarded as the Dutch 9/11.

Party membership: The party leader, Geert Wilders, is technically the only member of the party, which makes it an unusual entity in Dutch politics; PVV supporters are not permitted to register as members and the PVV also does not have an official youth organization.

Performance in the elections for the Dutch House of Representatives

Election Years	# of total votes	% of overall vote	# of overall seats won	Rank
2006	579 490	5.89	9 (out of 150)	5th
2010	1 454 493	15.45	24 (out of 150)	3rd
2012	950 263	10.08	15 (out of 150)	3rd

Source: Kiesraad. *Databank verkiezingsuitslagen* (Official repository of election results),

<<http://www.verkiezingsuitslagen.nl/>> (Retrieved 28 March 2013)

Performance in elections for the European Parliament

Election Years	# of overall votes	% of overall vote	# of overall seats won	Rank
2009	772 746	16.97	4 (out of 25) 5 (out of 26) in the aftermath of coming into force of Treaty of Lisbon	2nd
2014	630 139	13.3	4 (out of 26)	3rd

Note: The Lisbon Treaty raised the cap on the number of seats to 750 (the maximum being 96 and the minimum 6). In accordance with the "degressively proportional" distribution, the Netherlands gained one seat, which was allocated to the PVV party in December 2011.

On the European level, the PVV has close ties to the Belgian Vlaams Belang.

Sources:

Official website 2009 European Parliament elections – Results by country.

<[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/00082fcd21/Results-by-country-\(2009\).html?tab=18](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/00082fcd21/Results-by-country-(2009).html?tab=18)>

Infonu Netherlands. Europese verkiezingen 2009 in Nederland: definitieve uitslag (2009 European elections in the Netherlands – final results) <<http://mens-en-samenleving.infonu.nl/politiek/37270-europese-verkiezingen-2009-in-nederland-definitieve-uitslag.html>>

Parool Netherlands. Europees Parlement – Resultaten Nederland (European Parliament – Results for the Netherlands, 22 May 2014)

<<http://europa.verkiezingen.parool.nl/uitslag/resultaten.html>>

The PVV members within the European Parliament are part of the Non-Inscrits (are not affiliated with a recognized political group). Has close links with the Belgian Vlaams Belang.

Additional sources consulted:

Dutch Centre for documenting political parties. *Ledentalen Nederlandse politieke partijen per 1 Januari 2010, 2011, 2012* (Membership figures for Dutch political parties, for 2010, 2011 and 2012), October 2012.

<<http://pub.dnpp.eldoc.ub.rug.nl/FILES/root/DNPPledentallen/2012.pdf>>

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ProDemos House for Democracy and Justice. *Organisatie van partijen* (Political Organization of parties), 2012. <<http://www.prodemos.nl/Kenniscentrum/Informatie-over-politiek/Politieke-partijen/Organisatie-van-partijen>>

Nu Netherlands newspaper. Ook subsidie voor PVV en Verdonk (The PVV and Verdonk could benefit from subsidies), 28 April 2009 (Retrieved 9 April 2013).

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<http://pub.dnpp.eldoc.ub.rug.nl/FILES/root/DNPPpersberichten/pers_lt2012.pdf>

Die Republikaner (The Republicans)

Party leader and chairman: Rolf Schlierer (b. 1955)

Founding members: Franz Handlos, Ekkehard Voigt, Franz Schönhuber

Established (and officially registered): 27 November 1983

Party newspaper: *Neue Republik* (from April 2009)

Meaning of Name: The name chosen by the party reflects its commitment to a republican system of governance that is characterized by an emphasis on patriotism – the message is that patriotism is perfectly capable of thriving in a country which remains faithful to democratic principles. For instance, German politicians Kurt Schumacher and Ludwig Erhard who remained committed to the Weimar Republic ideas during the Nazi era are thought to exemplify the possibility of a successful blend between patriotic feelings and attachment to social democracy.

Party membership figures: 4000 (in 1986), a peak of 23 000 (mid 1990s), 6800 (in 2009), 5959 (at the end of 2010), downward trend in membership since 2009.

Performances in Bundestag/Parliamentary elections

Election Years	# of total votes	% of overall vote	# of overall seats won	Rank
1983	-	-	-	n/a
1987	-	-	-	n/a
1990	987 269	2.1	0 (out of 662)	7th
1994	875 239	1.9	0 (out of 672)	7th
1998	906 383	1.8	0 (out of 669)	7th
2002	280 671	0.6	0 (out of 603)	8th
2005	166 101	0.6	0 (out of 614)	8th
2009	193 396	0.4	0 (out of 622)	10th
2013	91 660	0.2	0 (out of 630)	12th

Sources:

Der Bundeswahlleiter (Federal Returning Officer). *Ergebnisse der Bundestagswahlen 1949-2009* (Results of the Bundestag elections 1949-

2009).<http://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/de/bundestagswahlen/fruehere_bundestagswahlen/>

Der Bundeswahlleiter (Federal Returning Officer). *Wahl zum 17. Deutschen Bundestag am 27. September 2009* (Elections for the 17th Bundestag held on 27 September 2009).<

<http://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/de/bundestagswahlen/BTW_BUND_09/ergebnisse/bundesergebnisse/index.html>

Der Bundeswahlleiter (Federal Returning Officer). Provisional result of the Election to the German Bundestag 2013.

Performances in elections for the European Parliament

Election Years	# of overall votes	% of overall vote	# of overall seats won	Rank
1984	-	-	-	n/a
1989	2 008 629	7.1	6 (out of 81)	5 th
1994	1 387 070	3.9	0 (out of 99)	5 th (shared)
1999	461 038	1.7	0 (out of 99)	6 th (shared)
2004	485 662	1.9	0 (out of 99)	7 th (shared)
2009	347 887	1.3	0 (out of 99)	7 th
2014	109 856	0.4	0 (out of 96)	14 th

On the European level, the party has close links with the *Vlaams Belang*, the Front National and the Austrian Freedom Party.

Sources:

DerBundeswahlleiter (Federal Returning Officer). *Ergebnisse der Europawahlen von 1979 bis 2009* (Results of the elections for the European Parliament between 1979 and 2009)

<http://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/de/europawahlen/fruehere_europawahlen/>

DerBundeswahlleiter (Federal Returning Officer). *Europawahl am 7. Juni 2009* (European Parliament elections held on the 7th of June 2009)

<http://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/de/europawahlen/EU_BUND_09/ergebnisse/bundesergebnisse/>

DerBundeswahlleiter (Federal Returning Officer). *Vorläufiges Ergebnis der Europawahl 2014* (Results of European Parliament elections held on 25 May 2014)

<http://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/de/europawahlen/EU_BUND_14/ergebnisse/bundesergebnisse/>

Additional sources consulted:

Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. Die Republikaner Partei (The Republicans), <<http://www.bpb.de/methodik/VZGVY5.0.0.REP.html>> (Retrieved 31 March 2013).

Lotta Zeitung. NRW: pro NRW auch finanziell nicht attraktiv für Republikaner (A stance that is in favor of the NRW will result in financial costs for the Republicans), 3 April 2012. <<http://nrwrex.wordpress.com/2012/04/03/nrw-%E2%80%9Epro-nrw-auch-finanziell-nicht-attraktiv-fur-%E2%80%9Erepublikaner/>> (Retrieved 31 March 2013)

REP official website. *Bundesparteiprogramm der Republikaner* (REP Party Manifesto), 2009. (Retrieved 1 April 2013).

REP official website. *Die Republikaner – Entstehung und Entwicklung der Partei* (The Republicans – Origins and Development of the Party). <<http://www.rep-nrw.de/?ArticleID=aa2753a9-24f8-44db-aa07-1bfc988286bc>> (Retrieved 31 March 2013)

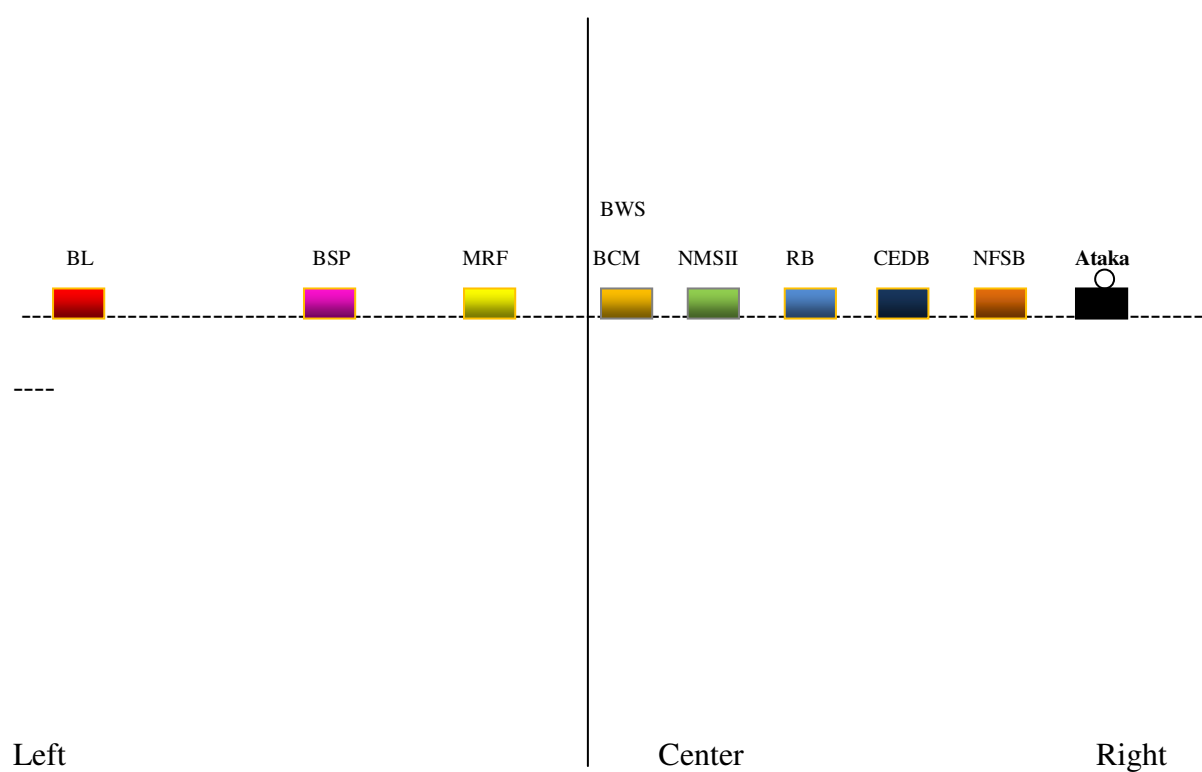
REP official website. *Entstehung der Partei* (Origins of the Party). <<http://www.rep-bayern.de/content.aspx?ArticleID=3043196b-a8dc-4538-bb4f-cc17c0e1a9ff>> (Retrieved 31 March 2013)

Statista Deutschland. Rechtsradikale Parteien in Deutschland: Entwicklung der Mitgliederzahlen von NPD, DVU und Republikanern von 2005 bis 2011 (Radical right parties in Germany: changes in membership figures of the NPD, DVU and REP between 2005 and 2011). <<http://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/4760/umfrage/entwicklung-der-mitgliederzahlen-von-rechtsradikalen-parteien/>> (Retrieved 31 March 2013)

Appendix 3

Ideological Positioning of the Parties

Bulgaria – current political spectrum



Source: graph created based on classifications in Karasimeonov, Georgi (ed.). Barometer - the political parties of Bulgaria, Friedrich-Ebert Bureau for Political Analyses, Issue 1, January – March 2013.

Legend:

BL - *Българската левица* (The Bulgarian Left)

BSP – *Българска социалистическа партия* (Bulgarian Socialist Party)

MRF – *Движение за права и свободи* (Movement for Rights and Freedoms)

UDF – *Съюз на демократичните сили* (Union of Democratic Forces)

DSB – *Демократи за силна България* (Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria)

NMSII - *Национално движение за стабилност и възход* (National Movement for Stability and Progress)

BCM – *Движение “България на гражданите”* (Bulgaria for Citizens Movement)

BWS – *България без цензура* (Bulgaria Without Censorship)

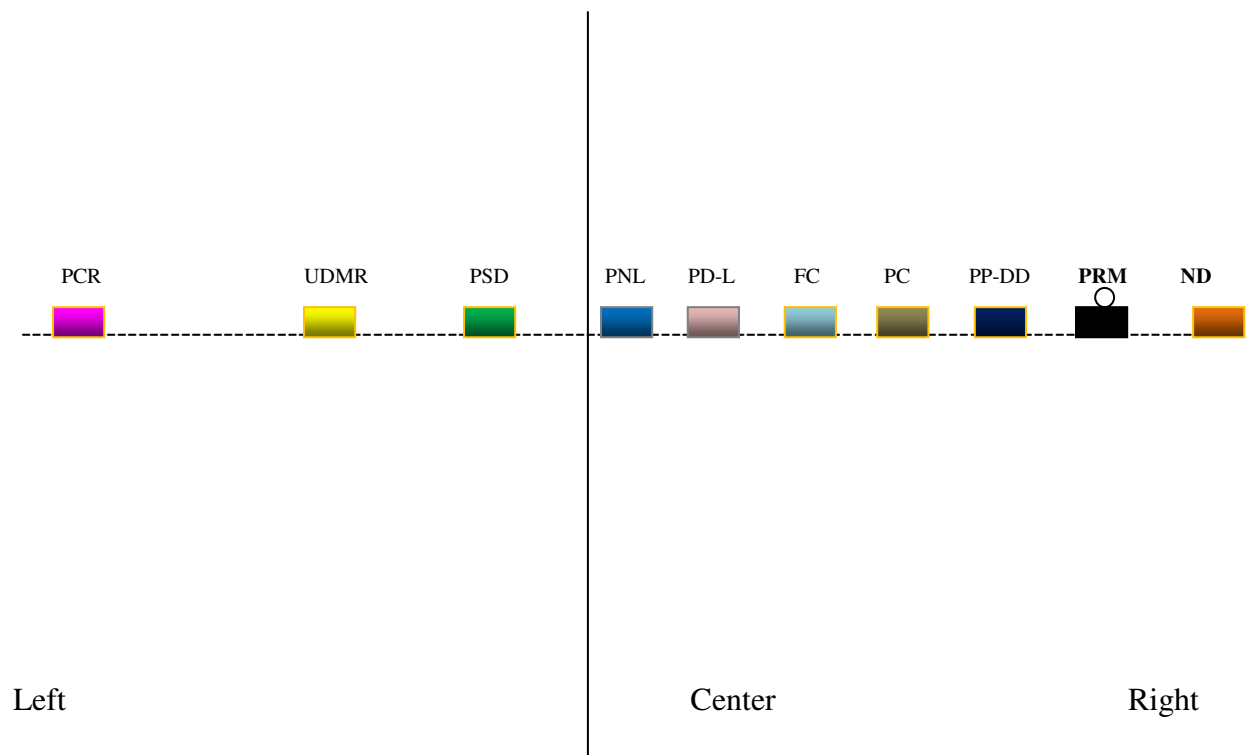
CEDB – *Граждани за европейско развитие на България* (Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria)

Ataka - *Политическа партия Атака* (Ataka political party)

NFSB – *Национален фронт за спасение на България* (National Movement for the Salvation of the Fatherland)

Note: The DSB, UDF and three other parties participated in the 2014 European Parliament elections as part of the Reformist Bloc (RB) electoral alliance, winning one seat in total.

Romania – current political spectrum



Source: graph created drawing on information from Boamfa, Ionel and Raluca Horea-Serban. Continuities and breaches in the electoral behavior at the local elections in Romania after 1990, University of Iasi project, 2009 (Retrieved 29 April 2013) and Popica, Dan. *Dreapta Civica & Politica* (Civic and Political Right), Politicstand, 28 March 2013 (Retrieved 30 April 2013)

Legend:

PCR - *Partidul Comunist Român* (Romanian Communist Party)

UDMR - *Uniunea Democrată Maghiară din România* (Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania)

PSD – *Partidul Social Democrat* (Romanian Social Democratic Party)

PNL – *Partidul National Liberal* (National Liberal Party of Romania)

PDL – *Partidul Democrat-Liberal* (Romanian Democratic Liberal Party)

FC - *Forȃa Civică* (Civic Force)

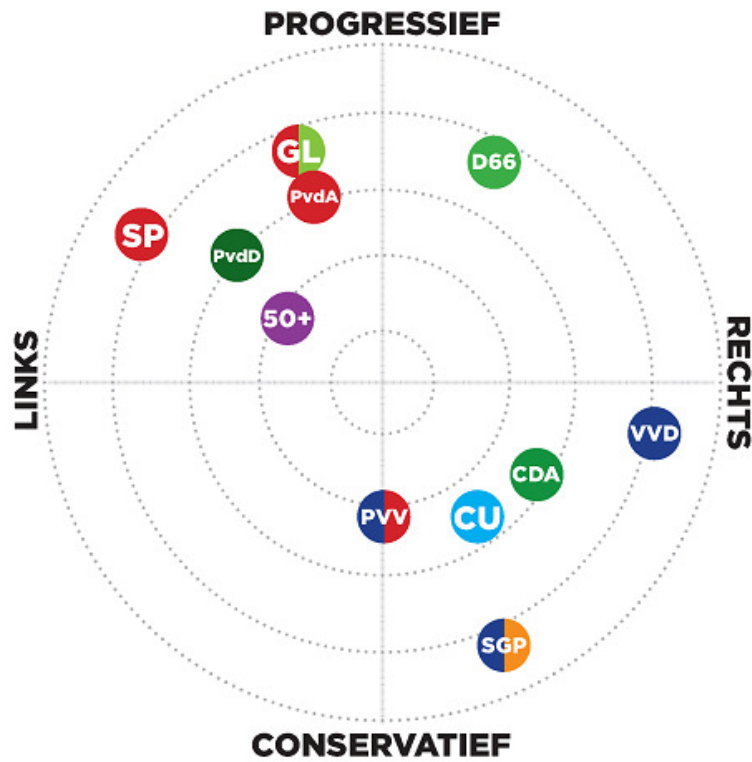
PC – *Partidul Conservator* (Conservative Party of Romania)

PP-DD - *Partidul Poporului – Dan Diaconescu* (The People’s Party – Dan Diaconescu)

PRM – *Partidul Romania Măre* (Greater Romania Party)

ND - Noua Dreaptă – New Right

Dutch current political spectrum



Source: graph taken from Krouwel, André. The polarized nature of the Dutch party system and the volatility of the electorate ensure that any “victory for the centre” is likely to be short-lived, the London School of Economics and Political Science, 19 September 2012 (Retrieved 26 April 2013)

Note: Conservatism in the Netherlands (like in other countries) is associated with a maintenance of the status quo and particular viewpoints on issue areas like immigration. However, it has been argued that in contrast to neighbouring Western European states (for example, Germany), an especially negative stigma attached to conservatism pervades mainstream Dutch discourses and conservatism is equated with sympathy for authoritarianism. In some respects, the PVV party also ticks the box of “secular progressivism”, as unlike some other populist parties, strong opposition to feminism and gay rights does not constitute an important facet of its identity and there is strong acceptance of the notion of secular governance.

The Dutch have a natural opposition to anything resembling ideological extremes (which was lamented by some interviewees like Kortenoeven, who emphasized that many parties in the country do not have a coherent ideological profile and are a “mixed bag”; a “liberal-conservative” party is viewed as an oxymoron).¹²⁸⁹ In 1956, the headquarters of the Dutch Communist Party in the Netherlands were destroyed in a rare instance of political violence in the country, reflective of some left-leaning intellectuals’ disillusionment with the “Eastern European face” of communism (the trigger event being the Soviet response to the 1956 Hungarian Revolution).¹²⁹⁰

Additional sources consulted:

Van der Dunk, Herrmann. *Conservatism in the Netherlands* (1978)

Jansen, Giedo, Nan Dirk de Graaf and Ariana Need. *Class voting, social changes and political changes in the Netherlands 1971-2006* (2011)

Schuh, Cora, Marian Burchardt and Monika Wohlrab-Sahr. *Contested Secularities – Religious Minorities and Secular Progressivism in the Netherlands* (2012)

¹²⁸⁹ Author’s interviews with Wim Kortenoeven and Ad van Berkel.

Legend:

SP - *Socialistische Partij* (Socialist Party)

PvdD - *Partij voor de Dieren* (Party for Animals)

GL - *GroenLinks* (GreenLeft)

PvdA - *Partij van de Arbeid* (Labour Party)

50+ - *50PLUS*

PVV – *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (Party for Freedom)

CU - *ChristenUnie* (Christian Union)

CDA - *Christen-Democratisch Appèl* (Christian Democratic Appeal)

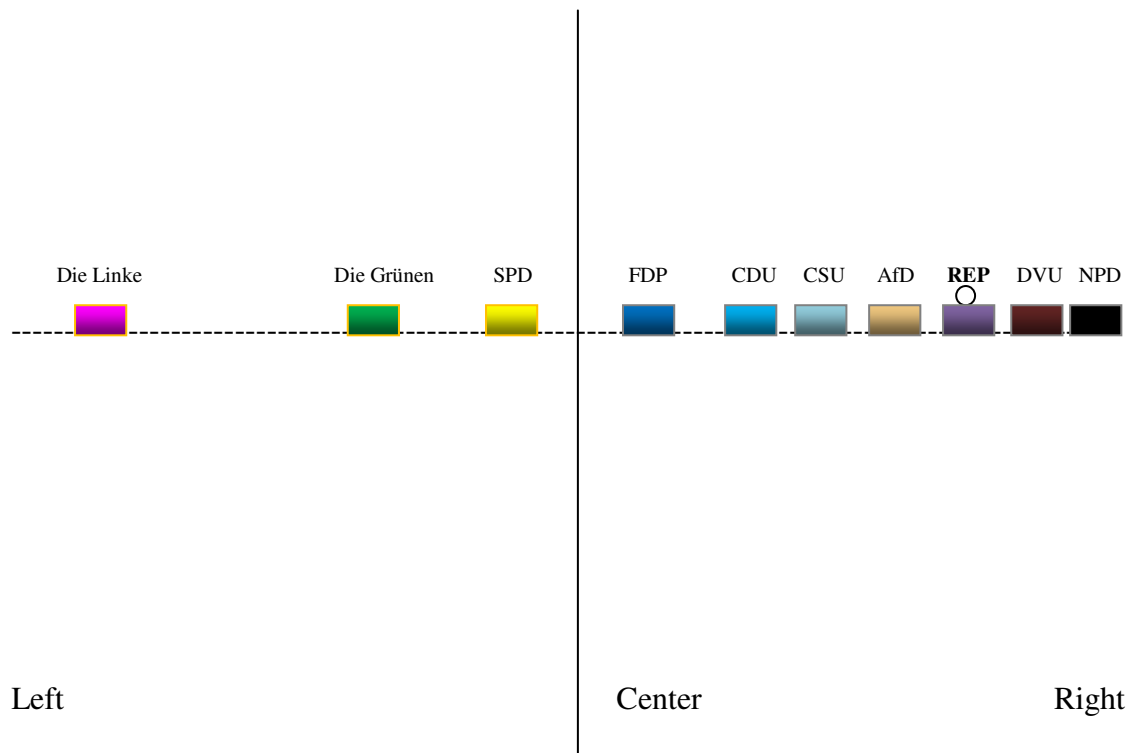
SGP - *Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij* (Reformed Political Party)

D66 - *Democraten 66* (Democrats 66)

VVD - *Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie* (People's Party for Freedom and Democracy)

¹²⁹⁰ Arblaster, Paul. A History of the Low Countries (2006), p. 285.

Germany – current political spectrum



Sources: modified from Infratest ARD Deutschland Trend. *Verortung auf dem Links-Rechts-Kontinuum*”

(Positioning of political parties within the left-right spectrum), April 2012. <http://www.infratest-dimap.de/umfragen-analysen/bundesweit/ard-deutschlandtrend/2012/verortung-auf-dem-links-rechts-kontinuum/> (Retrieved 29 April 2013)

Also based on information obtained from Klett digital. *Infoblatt Parteienlandschaft in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland – Kurzcharakteristik aller Parteien* (Information pertaining to the political landscape in Germany – brief characterizations of all the parties), 2012. (Retrieved 29 April 2013)

Legend:

Die Linke – The German Left

Die Grünen – Die Grüne Alternative (The Greens – the Green Alternative)

SPD - *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (Social Democratic Party of Germany)

FDP – *Freie Demokratische Partei* (The Free Democratic Party)

CDU - *Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands* (The Christian Democratic Union of Germany)

CSU - *Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern* (Christian Social Union in Bavaria)

AfD – *Alternative für Deutschland* (Alternative for Germany)

DVU – *Deutsche Volksunion* (German People's Union)

NPD – *Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (National Democratic Party of Germany)

REP – *Die Republikaner* (The Republicans)

Appendix 4

List of politicians interviewed

Ataka (Bulgaria)

Mario Punchev (b. 1962) – 2007 candidate for the Sofia City Council, Ataka representative for the 24th Sofia district; 26 April 2012, Sofia, Bulgaria.

Ventsislav Lakov (b. 1962) – Member of the 41st and 42nd National Assemblies of Bulgaria; 24 April 2012, Sofia, Bulgaria.

Nikolay Pehlivanov (b. 1972) - Member of the 41st National Assembly of Bulgaria, candidate for mayor of Sofia in 2007; 19 April 2012, Sofia, Bulgaria.

Nikolay Alexandrov (b. 1986) - Member of the 42nd National Assembly of Bulgaria, member of the general party council; 20 November 2012 (telephone interview).

Galen Monev (b. 1986) - Member of the 42nd National Assembly of Bulgaria, member of the general party council and delegations to the European Parliament, former regional coordinator for Southern and Central Bulgaria; 18 February 2013 (telephone interview).

Roumen Vatashki (b. 1962) – regional leader of the Ataka party (Pernik), candidate for mayor of Pernik in 2009, 2014 European Parliament elections candidate; 16 September 2012, Pernik, Bulgaria.

Adrian Asenov (b. 1973) – regional representative of the Ataka party for Northwestern Bulgaria; 29 November 2012 (telephone interview).

Shavel S. – representative of the Ataka party for the Zone B-5 Sofia district; 30 April 2012, Sofia, Bulgaria.

PRM (Romania)

Vladimir Fârșirotu (b. 1943) – former Member of Parliament of Romania (2004-2008); 25 September 2012, Bucharest, Romania.

Romeo Crașmariu (b. 1960) – regional party leader (Brăila); 22 September 2012, Brăila, Romania.

Eugen Mihăescu (b. 1937) – Member of the Romanian Senate (2004-2008), Member of the European Parliament (2005-2007), leading Romanian member of the now defunct Identity, Tradition and Sovereignty (ITS) Group in the European Parliament, which had been established by Front National member Bruno Gollnisch; 8 May 2013 (per e-mail).

Livius Țîrneă (b. 1977) – regional party leader (Timișoara) and head of PRM youth organization, 24 April 2013 (telephone interview, with help of interpreter).

Gheorghe Funar (b. 1949) – General Secretary of the party, former mayor of Cluj-Napoca, Member of the Romanian Senate (2004-2008), leader of the party since the 27th of July 2013, deputy leader at the time of the conversation; 26 April 2013 (telephone interview, with help of interpreter).

Ioan Enăşoae – deputy regional leader of PRM (Bacău); 11 May 2013, Bacău, Romania (telephone interview, with help of interpreter).

Petru Cojan – regional leader of PRM (Bacău), candidate for the Romanian Senate during the 2012 Romanian elections; 29 May 2013 (telephone interview, with help of interpreter).

Ghiorghe Talau (b. 1948) – 2009 European Parliament elections candidate, member of the Sibiu regional party council; 19 September 2012, Bucharest, Romania.

PVV (Netherlands)

Barry Madlener (b. 1969) – Parliamentary leader for the PVV in the European Parliament (2009-2012), Member of the Dutch House of Representatives; 19 November 2011 (telephone interview).

Wim Kortenoeven (b. 1955) – former Member of the Dutch House of Representatives (2010-2012); 6 March 2013 (telephone interview) and 25 June 2013, The Hague, South Holland province, Netherlands.

Patricia van der Kammen (b. 1972) - Parliamentary leader of the Party for Freedom in the European Parliament (2012-present), former regional leader in Noord-Brabant; 28 November 2011, Tilburg, Noord-Brabant province, Netherlands.

Daniël van der Stoep (b. 1980) – Member of the European Parliament (2009-2011), 30 November 2011, The Hague, South Holland province, Netherlands;

Matthijs Janssen (b. 1980) – regional leader of the PVV (Groningen); 21 November 2011, Groningen, Groningen province, Netherlands.

Ad van Berkel (b. 1945) – regional leader of the PVV (Drenthe); 22 November 2011, Eelde, Drenthe province, Netherlands.

Joost van Hooff (b. 1946) – regional leader of the PVV (North Holland province), 2012 elections candidate for the Dutch House of Representatives; 23 May 2013 (telephone interview, with help of interpreter).

2009 EP election candidate (name withdrawn by request); 27 November 2011 (telephone interview).

REP (Germany)

Rolf Schlierer (b. 1955) – party leader and chairman of REP since 1994; 11 March 2012, Stuttgart, Baden-Württemberg, Germany.

Johann Gärtner (b. 1950) – leading member of the general party council, second-in-command within the ranks of the REP party; 4 March 2012, Kissing, Bavaria, Germany.

Alexander van Drage (b. 1980) - member of the general party council, 2008 Bavaria provincial elections candidate; 13 March 2012, Munich, Bavaria, Germany.

Andreas Burkhardt (b. 1980) – regional leader REP in Pirmasens, member of the city council; 6 March 2012 (telephone interview).

Wolf Krisch (b. 1934) – founding member of REP, former regional leader in Ludwigsburg, former member of the Baden-Württemberg provincial parliament; 19 December 2012 (per e-mail).

Alfred Dagenbach (b. 1947) – former regional leader of REP (Heilbronn); 23 November 2012 (telephone interview).

Karl-Martin Kohlmann (b. 1977) – former regional leader of REP (Sachsen), 2004 European Parliament elections candidate; 17 February 2013 (telephone interview).

Köln regional council REP member (anonymity requested) (22 November 2012, Munich, Bavaria, Germany).

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Further Note

Over the course of my PhD studies, I published a short article in OpenDemocracy (13 December 2012) under the title of "Bulgarian national identity in an era of European integration" on the invitation of David Krivanek and reviewed a paper on the topic of "Norwegian Euroscepticism and the political system" in December 2011 as a member of the International Relations and European Politics (IREP) postgraduate group at the University of Bath.